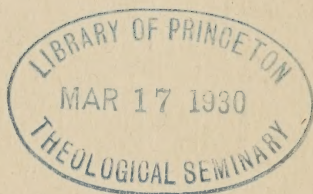


*The* INDIANS  
*of*  
SOUTH AMERICA  
*and the*  
GOSPEL

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*Alex. Rattray Hay*





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The Indians of South America  
and the gospel



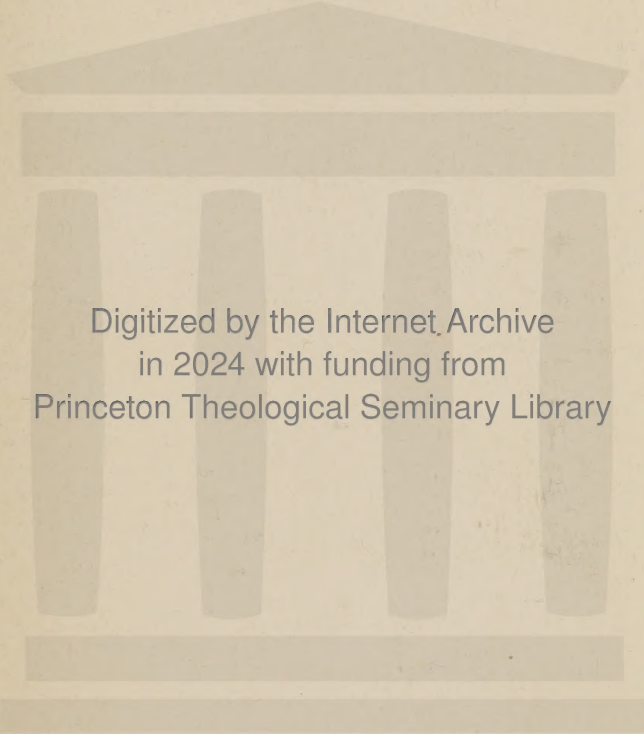






The Indians of South America  
and the Gospel





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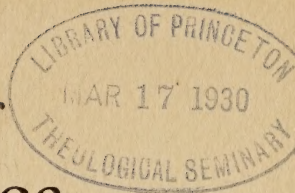




### TROPHIES OF GOD'S GRACE

*Above:* Terena Indian Preachers. *Below:* Deacon Honorio, Terena Silversmith and Preacher.

# The Indians of South America and the Gospel



By

REV. ALEX. RATTRAY HAY

*Superintendent of Indian Work of the Inland South  
America Missionary Union. Author of  
"Saints and Savages," etc.*

With Foreword by

P. W. PHILPOTT, D.D.

*Pastor of Moody Memorial Church, Chicago*

ILLUSTRATED



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To  
Those in the Homelands,  
By Whose Sacrifice and Faithful Intercession  
We Were Sustained and Prospered,  
This Book is Gratefully  
Inscribed



## FOREWORD

**T**O describe in accurate and compelling language a problem of such magnitude as the evangelization of the Indians of South America requires skill, experience and sympathy. I know of no man better fitted for the task than Alex. Rattray Hay. As the successor to and worthy son of John Hay, founder of the Inland South America Missionary Union, the author—through years of extensive travel in South America—has had unusual opportunity for detailed study of the Indian situation.

Although a number of books about South America have already been published, there is urgent need for a clear, challenging survey of conditions and possibilities in vast areas wholly unevangelized. The present volume is, I feel, a helpful contribution to the supply of that need. It should be welcomed by Christians everywhere, especially those whose relation to Christ's Great Commission is Scriptural, and therefore personal.

For the sake of the speedy proclamation of the Gospel "to every creature," and the hastening of the return of the Lord Jesus Christ, I bespeak a broad reading for this informing book.

P. W. PHILPOTT.

*Moody Memorial Church,  
Chicago.*





## PREFACE

A WIDESPREAD interest is being manifested in the unevangelized Indian tribes of South America. There are signs that, in the all-wise providence of God, these Indian peoples, who have suffered so cruelly and been so long neglected, are at last to have the Gospel witness given to them. It is a gigantic task, however, for it means the evangelization of one of the greatest of the unoccupied mission fields of the world.

This brief survey of the missionary situation in inland South America has been prepared at the request of many who have become interested in that land, and who desired such detailed information as would enable them to understand its special needs and problems. We have endeavoured to condense into small compass as much information as possible about the country, the manners and customs of the Indians, the results already obtained in work amongst them and the great task which remains to be undertaken.

One of the most delightful of our experiences while on furlough in the homelands has been to meet those who have fellowshiped with us in the work through their prayers. The intercessor is as necessary as the missionary: the one cannot work without the other. The missionary depends upon the prayer-support of the home partners, and none

realizes more fully than he how effectual are their prayers. While we have found many in the homelands who do not realize the extent of their privilege and responsibility towards the "regions beyond," we have also met many whose sacrifice was equal to that of any missionary. It is our hope that this little book may inspire those who pray to pray more earnestly, and enable them to pray more intelligently.

A. R. H.

*United States Headquarters,  
Inland South America Missionary Union,  
113 Fulton Street, New York, N. Y.*



## CONTENTS

I.	THE WHITE MAN AND THE RED MAN .	13
II.	THE MISSIONARY TASK . . . .	28
III.	CONDITIONS AMONG THE UNCIVILIZED TRIBES . . . . .	48
IV.	THE METHOD OF APPROACH . . .	69
V.	THE MISSIONARY AND HIS ENVIRON- MENT . . . . .	88
VI.	TERENA CUSTOMS . . . . .	101
VII.	INDIAN SUPERSTITIONS AND WITCH- DOCTORS . . . . .	119
VIII.	HOW A TRIBE WAS WON . . .	135
IX.	NEW CREATURES IN CHRIST . . .	150



## ILLUSTRATIONS

	FACING PAGE
Trophies of God's Grace . . . . . <i>Title</i> Terena Indian Preachers. Deacon Honorio, Terena Silversmith and Preacher.	
Xingú Indians and their Bark Canoes . . . . .	20
Three Types of South American Indians . . . . .	50
A Bororo. Indians of Xingú Headwaters. A Nhambiquara Lad.	
A Study in Contrasts . . . . .	78
Parecí Indian Woman and Child. Terena Christian—with a Nhambiquara Heathen.	
New Creatures in Christ . . . . .	112
Christian Chief, Marcolino of the Terenas, and His Wife Georgina, Each a Preacher of the Gospel. Maria and Her Baby.	
Indian Church in Bananal and Part of the Congregation . . . . .	144



## I

### THE WHITE MAN AND THE RED MAN

*"A great door and effectual is opened unto me and there are many adversaries."*—1 CORINTHIANS 16:9.

**S**OUTH AMERICA is a land of great things: of great mountains, the giant Andes stretching in an unbroken chain of snow-capped peaks for five thousand miles from Panamá, in the north, to Cape Horn, in the south; of great, fertile plains hundreds of square miles in extent; of plateaux across which a horseman may journey in one direction a couple of months without descending to the lowland; of virgin forests of enormous extent, rich in valuable timbers; of mighty rivers up which you may travel two and three thousand miles and then not reach the end.

It is also a land of great countries. Brazil is larger than the United States of America and just smaller than the combined areas of Australia and South Africa. Argentina is one-third the size of Brazil but has more land than Britain, Germany, France, Italy, Spain, Norway and Sweden put together. Bolivia and Perú are also large countries, each being equal in area to three of the biggest European countries. Paraguay, one of the smallest of the republics, has an area larger than that of Great Britain.



South America is a great continent with vast resources and a future that holds almost unlimited possibilities. It has an area equal to that of Europe and the United States of America combined, and sixty times greater than that of Great Britain.

South America is destined to become a land of great progress and development. For several years colonists from Southern Europe and Germany have been pouring into large sections of the country. One by one, the governments are becoming stable and progressive; industry is beginning to be developed and beautiful, modern cities of a million and more inhabitants are springing up. A national consciousness is beginning to assert itself and it is no longer open to question that the South American countries have a wonderful future before them as the great, new lands to which multitudes in overcrowded Europe, excluded now from the United States, are turning their eyes with eager hope in their search for a new home in a land where there is room to work and live. This modern progress and development, however, has been confined mostly to a restricted strip of coastline, leaving the vast interior, a continent within a continent, a territory as large as the whole of Europe, but little affected. In many parts of the interior the most primitive conditions still prevail, though there are some notable exceptions.

**The Unknown Interior.** But South America is a land of great contrasts. The rude huts of the semi-civilized Indians often cluster around the outskirts of a modern city. In interior towns the

automobile, the ox-cart and the saddle ox may be equally familiar sights in the streets. A few miles from many a progressive town may be found the primitive shelters of a village of forest Indians. All degrees of civilization, semi-civilization and savagery are to be found in that great and wonderful southern continent. While the palatial river steamers ply on the lower reaches of the great rivers, the wild Indian, naked and painted, paddles his dugout canoe on the distant headwaters.

As the most modern machinery speeds up the output of the great factories in the seacoast towns, the savage in the remote interior hunts with his bow and arrow, digs roots with a wooden spade, fells trees with a stone axe and hollows them out with fire to make his canoes. The gorgeous *salons* of the great cities are filled with the most up-to-date fashion and culture while the Indians in their lonely forest fastnesses dance and chant through the long night hours to appease an evil spirit or secure the favour of the spirit of the chase.

There is still a great part of the heart of South America that is practically unknown. The courses of the main rivers in the interior have been traversed at least once by explorers, but in many cases, owing to the great distances involved and the difficulty of carrying a sufficiently large store of provisions, the expeditions have been forced to confine their efforts to a dash along the river courses, seeing nothing but the dense edges of the impenetrable jungle overhanging the banks and learning little or nothing about the extensive territories

lying between the few main streams, about their primitive inhabitants, or about the many tributaries, some of them doubtless great rivers in themselves, by which these territories are drained.

Several of the republics, notably Brazil, have large areas of this character within their borders. Few of the great virgin forests in these vast interior lands have ever been trodden by the foot of the white man; they remain to-day a region of mystery, surrounded by the glamour of the unknown, appealing irresistibly to the spirit of adventure. "The Land of the Future," men call it as they think of the untapped resources, the fertile plains, the wealth of numberless rivers, and the riches that must lie beneath the soil, stored for some future generation. But God's people, burdened for the salvation of their fellow men, speak of it as "The Neglected Land," a tragedy of a Great Commission that is unfulfilled. For in that great interior land, that far-stretching empire of to-morrow, there roam unnumbered tribes of red men, living and dying in the remoteness of their wild country, to whom nobody has ever told the message of God's love.

**The Indian Population.** It is impossible to give the exact number of Indians or Indian tribes in South America. They are scattered through all except one of the ten South American republics. Many of them have retired to the most inaccessible parts of the country to escape from the ever-approaching white man. That there are tribes that have not yet been heard of, living in unex-

plored regions, is beyond question. One such tribe, the Iranches in the north of Matto Grosso State, have recently been reported by missionaries of the Inland South America Missionary Union working amongst the Nhambiquaras and Parecís. The existence of the Iranches had been suspected for some time, but it is only recently that a few of the tribe ventured to visit an outlying village of the Parecís.

Evidence of the existence of another unknown tribe in the lowlands of eastern Bolivia is reported by an I. S. A. M. U. missionary who recently travelled through that region. The Sirionó Indians, a warlike people, had for long waged war upon the white settlers who were encroaching upon their territory. They attacked the farms and settlements of the whites, whom they had no reason to love, and were a terror to the scattered population on the Grande River. This continued until the beginning of 1926 when the attacks ceased and small groups of emaciated Indians began to appear unarmed at the white settlements, indicating by signs their peaceful intentions. It is believed that the unfortunate Sirionós have been attacked by a powerful Chaco tribe from the South who have practically exterminated them and taken possession of their lands. The remnant would now gladly receive help and instruction from the white man. What an opportunity for the missionary of the Gospel!

There are many other tribes that, though their existence is known, are so fierce and unapproach-



able that their numbers cannot be ascertained. Even among the millions of semi-civilized Quichua and Aymará Indians nothing like an accurate census has ever been attempted. Several of the governments have compiled statistics of the Indians within their respective countries, but these are in most cases only rough estimates. Brazil has led the republics in a serious and praiseworthy attempt to protect and care for the aboriginal tribes, but most of the governments have shown a complete indifference to the problem, while a few have favoured a policy of extermination.

**The Official Attitude to the Indian.** Even scientists and men of high position socially and politically have definitely advocated the extermination of the Indian as a logical and necessary consequence of the advance of civilization. There are, however, in several of the republics, groups forming of people of influence and standing, who denounce such opinions and manifest a sincere desire to see the Indians protected and taught that they may be incorporated into the national life. But, with the one exception of Brazil, these groups have no means by which they may accomplish their object.

There are several reasons which have influenced the South American governments in their attitude towards the Indian. Many of them have been so preoccupied with their own political problems that they have had no leisure to consider the needs of the Indians. Also, it must in fairness be recognized that the Indian problem in these countries

is an exceedingly difficult one and would tax to the utmost the wisdom and resources of the strongest and most enlightened government. Even when a government would willingly protect the Indian from ruthless exploiters, it is often powerless to do so, for it cannot depend upon local officials and it has not the means at its disposal for preserving order throughout a great wild region that is difficult of access and removed a thousand miles from the seat of the central government.

**The Roman Catholic Church and the Indian.** Another factor which has influenced the policy of these governments and the attitude of the people generally towards the Indian, is the example and teaching of the Roman Catholic Church. It is a matter of history that during and after the conquest of South America the priests who followed the soldiers too often did not despise the use of force as a means for the conversion of the aboriginal inhabitants, nor did they have any scruples against exploiting them for their own enrichment. Exceptions there were, and all honour to the few sincere souls who contended for the rights of a weak and sadly wronged race and who spent themselves in their behalf. But few they were and these exceptions do not condone for the sins of their brethren nor was their influence sufficient to counteract the example of the many.

The great "Missions" of the Jesuits followed the period of the conquest, and the results of their work remain. In Paraguay and western Bolivia the massive stone ruins of churches and extensive

mission compounds still bear impressive testimony to the thoroughness of the work. But even these missions were not free from the charge of exploitation. The aim in view never seemed to be higher than the reduction of the Indian to serfdom and the teaching of the observance of certain religious ceremonies, which were simply superimposed upon the old animistic beliefs and superstitions. The effect of such a method may be clearly seen to-day among the descendants of these Indian peoples who were thus "Christianized." Their character shows the weakness of the serf and their religion is a hopeless mixture of Roman Catholic ritual and Indian superstition. The Jesuits were finally expelled and only a few scattered missions are now carried on by other orders. The missionary spirit in the Roman Catholic Church in South America, such as it was, is practically dead, although there are still many tribes that have never been touched by Catholicism.

**Blind Leaders of the Blind.** To-day, the civilized or semi-civilized Indians cannot be considered as Christians in any true sense. Their religion is pagan and the priests that minister to them are too often degenerate creatures whose impure lives are a byword among the people. A typical priest is thus described by the great scientist, Alfred Russell Wallace:

"The Padre having come to Guia, most of the Indians returned with me to attend the festa and get their children baptized. . . . Frei José dos Santos In-



XINGU INDIANS AND THEIR BARK CANOES





nocentes [Friar Joseph of the Innocent Saints] was a tall, thin, prematurely old man, thoroughly worn out by every kind of debauchery, his hands crippled and his body ulcerated; yet he still delighted in recounting the feats of his youth and was celebrated as the most original and amusing story teller in the Province of Pará. He was carried up the hill from the riverside in a hammock, and took a couple of days to rest before he commenced his ecclesiastical operations. . . . He had been a soldier, then a friar in a convent and afterwards a parish priest.

“He told tales of his convent life just like what we read in Chaucer of their doings in his time. Don Juan was an innocent compared with Frei José; but he told us he had a great respect for his cloth and never did anything disreputable—during the day!

“At length the baptisms took place; there were some fifteen or twenty Indian children of all ages to undergo the operation at once. There are seven or eight distinct processes in the Roman Catholic baptism well calculated to attract the attention of the Indian: there is water and holy oil,—and spittle rubbed on the eyes, and crosses on the eyes, nose, mouth and body,—and kneeling and prayers in between, which all bear sufficient resemblance to the complicated operations of their own ‘pages’ (conjurers) to make them think they have got something very good in return for the shilling they pay for the ‘ceremony.’”

Certainly, priests are to be met with who, though ignorant regarding spiritual things, are at least sincere in their motives, but, unfortunately, these are the exception. The Roman Catholicism of these peoples has been so degraded and corrupted by su-

perstition and abuse, that it would shock even Roman Catholics in North America and Britain.

Dr. W. E. Browning, Educational Secretary of the Committee on Coöperation in Latin America, refers to the present religious situation among the Indian peoples as follows:

“Many are nominally Roman Catholics, although their state of faith is little more than a baptized paganism in which Christian sacraments are oddly blended with the most grotesque and repulsive native superstitions and observances.

“But in the far interior . . . there are many tribes that have never been reached with the Gospel message. Rome has been busy fortifying herself in the cities and communities of European origin, and has given little thought to the millions of natives who are to-day, after four hundred years of unlimited opportunity, throughout all this great region, as thoroughly pagan as when Columbus first turned his caravels towards the West.”<sup>1</sup>

**Merely a Wild Beast.** Many of the priests to-day teach plainly that the Indian who has not been baptized into the Roman Catholic Church has no soul and is therefore on a level with the beasts of the forest. Upon that basis they excuse and in many cases uphold the extermination of the Indian. The writer has known personally many people in South America who considered that to kill a wild Indian was not murder because the Indian did not possess a soul. Thus justifying themselves, we

<sup>1</sup> *Roman Christianity in Latin America*, pp. 49, 50.

have known parties of men to hunt Indians and shoot them down simply for sport. We have also known them to present infected clothing to unsuspecting Indian visitors with the boasted intention of exterminating the tribe. Wallace reports a conversation he had with the priest, Frei José, when he encountered him a second time on the Amazon:

“Our conversation turning on the prevalence of the smallpox in Pará, he related an anecdote of his own diplomatic powers with respect to that dreadful disease, on which he appeared to pride himself considerably. ‘When I was in Bolivia,’ he said, ‘there were several nations of very warlike Indians who plundered and murdered travellers on the way to Santa Cruz. The President sent the soldiers after them and spent much money in powder and ball, but with very little effect. The smallpox was in the city at the time and the clothes of all who died of it were ordered to be burnt, to prevent infection. One day, conversing with His Excellency about the Indians, I put him up to a much cheaper way than powder and ball for exterminating them. ‘Instead of burning the clothes,’ said I, ‘just order them to be put in the way of the Indians; they are sure to take possession of them and they’ll die off like wild fire.’ He followed my advice and in a few months there was no more heard of the depredations of the Indians. Four or five nations were completely destroyed. ‘For,’ added he, ‘the bixiga plays the devil among the Indians.’”

**Brazil's Effort to Protect the Indian.** Brazil has set a notable example in her Society for the Protection of the Indians, the official society to

which the care of the Indians within the republic has been committed, and which functions as a department under the Ministry of Agriculture. The Society has followed an enlightened policy, although it has been handicapped by lack of resources and the difficulty of obtaining a suitable personnel for the lower rank of officials. It has established posts amongst several tribes to insure their protection and has on several occasions saved Indian lands from being appropriated by land-grabbers and politicians. The fact that this Society can exist and succeed in its efforts to protect the Indians only because in Brazil the Church has been separated from the State, is a terrible indictment against the Roman Catholic Church in South America. It has to face the opposition of that Church continually in its work. The same officials of the Society, who have fought upon the floor of the Brazilian legislative assembly and in the public press that Indian lands might not be robbed from their legitimate owners, have also had the courage to expose publicly the exploitation of the Indians carried on in the Catholic Missions in the country.

The higher officials of the S. P. I. are favourable towards evangelical missionary effort among the Indians. Officially they observe strict neutrality in religious matters, refusing to aid either Catholic or Evangelical but permitting freedom to all to teach and preach. But the writer and his companions have on many occasions received personal courtesies from its officials. Regarding the work of the I. S. A. M. U. among the Terena Indians in Matto



Grosso, Dr. Horta Barbosa, director of the S. P. I., put the following statement on record:

“ A large number of Indians attend the worship conducted by these ‘padres’ and there is a certain number among these Indians who have been sincerely converted to Protestantism, as it is generally believed. The S. P. I., doing its duty, allows them absolute liberty to attend worship as they may wish, being careful that good order be maintained and being concerned that under the pretext of religion the Indians should not be exploited—this, however, these worthy missionaries never attempted to do.”

The example of Brazil has not yet been followed by the other republics and the great majority of the Indians of South America are still despised and exploited: ignored or persecuted by most of the governments and abandoned by the Roman Catholic Church. The Indians can hope for nothing from the Roman Catholic Church nor has that Church any message to take to them. The responsibility for their evangelization and emancipation falls entirely upon the Evangelical forces. Up to the present, the Evangelical Church has little whereof to boast, for it must be confessed that her record, so far as the Indians of South America are concerned, is, in some respects, no better than that of Rome.

**Accepting the Challenge.** Evangelical Missions have an open field before them among the Indians of South America. It cannot be expected that governments and peoples professedly Roman Cath-

olic will be forward to welcome and aid the Evangelical worker, but in most cases at least they will place no obstacle in the way—and more than that we need not seek. Denominational boards have found it impossible to undertake the task, considering that they could not add new fields to those for which they were already committed. But the Great Commission stands, and who will dare to say that the Indians of South America were not included in the “all people” of the Master’s sweeping survey of the field for which His Church must be responsible to take the Gospel?

Union (interdenominational) boards, such as the Inland South America Missionary Union, have been formed for the purpose of evangelizing these neglected peoples. As Dr. D. A. Poling has well put it: “When some of the communions were slow to accept the challenge, their spiritual children not to be denied, went out under other flags. Independent boards made up from among those far-looking and sensitive souls who could not brook delay, took over unoccupied areas.”

During the past two or three years there has arisen a widespread and growing interest amongst missionary-hearted people of all denominations in the evangelization of the Indians. Coincident with this, there has been a removing of barriers, both political and material, and an opening of highways throwing the Indian regions open in a way they had never been before. At the same time more exploration work has been done by the missionaries on the field; the most inaccessible regions have

been penetrated; new stations have been established in the very heart of the Continent, and locations for many others have been discovered.

Much survey work has been done by the I. S. A. M. U., which has also established new centers for mission work among the Indians in several republics. Its workers have recently made four extensive exploration trips each of which took from two to five months to carry out. In three different directions they have penetrated the central region of the continent, collecting information of great value concerning many tribes. The Union has now in its possession a list of the names and exact location of 250 distinct, unreached tribes. It plans to extend its work to unreached tribes as speedily as God's provision may allow. An encouraging feature is the fact that many young people, consecrated and trained, are offering themselves for this service.

## II

### THE MISSIONARY TASK

*"There remaineth yet very much land to be possessed."*—JOSHUA 13: 1.

TO understand the Indian and the problem of his evangelization, something of his customs and manner of life should be known. Certain influences have played upon him for many generations, moulding his character and producing a well-defined type. Whether he be in Alaska or Patagonia, in the United States, Central America or South America, he presents the same characteristics. The general type of features is the same. Mentally and temperamentally the differences are only of degree. In the mythology of the different tribes there is a strange similarity; their philosophy of life, ethics and religious ideas are always essentially the same.

It is generally held that the Indian is of Mongol stock and there is much real evidence to support the theory. The round, squat features, almond eyes and straggly beard are often very marked and there are also affinities of language and custom. But when and how, in the dim distance of a remote past, their forefathers first passed over to the Americas can only be matters of conjecture.

Although for untold centuries this section of the human race was lost to the rest of the world and

ultimately became sunken, in great part, in the deepest depths of savagery, yet the traditions of the Creation, of the Flood and even of the Tower of Babel may still be recognized in the lore of many tribes, though often strangely and sadly corrupted by the accretions of ages of superstition. Certain arts which linger amongst them, sometimes legends, or traces of a one-time higher conception of God, also speak of a nobler heritage and of a time, long since, when they were the possessors of a much higher enlightenment and civilization.

Other two interesting theories of the origin of the South American aborigines have been propounded. One is that the Indians are the descendants of the so-called lost tribes of Israel, and elaborate works have been written to prove it. The other, which has been held by certain men of science, and which resulted from the discovery in Argentina of certain skeletal remains supposed to relate to early man and his forerunners, is that South America was the cradle of the human race and the scene of the evolution of man, and that the Indians constitute the oldest existing link between modern man and the ape. A party of American scientists visited South America to investigate these finds and their conclusions were summed up by Ales Hedlicka of the U. S. National Museum as follows:

“Unfortunately the general results of the inquiry . . . are not in harmony with the claims of the various authors who reported the several finds. As will



be seen by the details, the evidence is, up to the present time, unfavourable to the hypothesis of man's great antiquity, and especially to the existence of man's predecessors in South America; and it does not sustain the theories of the evolution of man in general, or even of that of the American man alone, in the southern continent. The facts gathered attest everywhere merely the presence of the already differentiated and relatively modern American Indian."

**Character and Intelligence of the Indian.** Many contradictory opinions have been expressed by travellers regarding the character and intelligence of the Indians. It is most interesting in this respect to compare the conclusions of two eminent men of science, Henry Walter Bates and Alfred Russell Wallace, who visited many Amazonian tribes during the same period. Bates writes regarding some of his Indian travelling companions on the river journey:

"It would be difficult to find a better-behaved set of men on a voyage than those poor Indians . . . they lived and worked together in the most perfect good fellowship. I never heard an angry word passed among them. The goodness of these Indians, like that of most others amongst whom I lived, consisted perhaps more in the absence of active bad qualities than in the possession of good ones, in other words, negative rather than positive. Their phlegmatic, apathetic temperament, coldness of desire, deadness of feeling, want of curiosity and slowness of intellect make the Amazonian Indian very uninteresting companions anywhere. Their imagination is of a dull, gloomy quality, and they seem

never to be stirred by the emotions—love, pity, admiration, fear, wonder, joy, enthusiasm. These are characteristics of the whole race. The good fellowship of our Cucamas appeared to rise not from warm sympathy but simply from the absence of eager selfishness in small matters.”

In some points, it is easy to understand how Bates misinterpreted the Indian character, though in others it is difficult to imagine how he arrived at such conclusions, as, for instance, when he accuses the Indians of lack of curiosity, a characteristic which the writer has always found to be highly developed amongst them and decidedly embarrassing to the traveller. When one becomes intimately acquainted with the Indian, one finds him as susceptible to emotion as any other human being, the apparent lack of it being due entirely to the custom of hiding it behind an inscrutable countenance. We have seen Indians engaged in a bitter quarrel yet their voices were subdued and even their tones hardly betrayed their feelings.

Wallace presents a truer picture. He says:

“Their figures are generally superb and I have never felt so much pleasure in gazing at the finest statue as at these living illustrations of the beauty of the human form. The development of the chest is such as I believe never exists in the best formed European, exhibiting a splendid series of convex undulations and without a hollow in any part of it. . . . The main feature in the personal character of the Indians in this part of South America is a degree of diffidence, bashfulness, of coldness which affects all their actions. It is this that

produces their quiet deliberation, their circuitous way of introducing a subject they have come to speak about, talking half an hour on different topics before mentioning it. Owing to this feeling they will run away if displeased, rather than complain, and will never refuse to undertake what is asked of them even when they are unable or do not intend to perform it.

“It is the same peculiarity which causes the men never to exhibit any feeling on meeting after a separation, though they have and show a great affection for their children whom they never part with, nor can they be induced to do so even for a short time. They rarely quarrel among themselves, work hard, and submit willingly to authority. . . . They more closely resemble the intelligent and noble races inhabiting the western prairies of North America. . . . They learn trades quickly and well. . . . They are ingenious and skillful workmen and readily adopt any customs of civilized life that may be introduced among them; and they seem capable of being formed, by education and good government, into a peaceable and civilized community.”

**Estimate of Indian Population.** For the purposes of missionary work, we consider as Indians all those, whether of pure or mixed blood, who speak an Indian language and must be reached through that medium. Many Indians have become completely incorporated into the life of the country in which they dwell, speaking Spanish or Portuguese, and presenting no special problem to the missionary.

The Indians may be readily divided into two main classes:

1. The descendants of the more civilized, highly organized nations such as the Quechuas, Aymarás and Guaranís, which are found mostly in Bolivia, Perú, Ecuador and Paraguay. Of these there are probably about six millions.
2. The forest Indians, broken up into hundreds of tribes, scattered throughout the interior of the continent and living in various stages of civilization, from the semi-civilized village dweller to the savage nomad. The number of this class would not exceed two and a half millions.

The following estimate of the number of Indians in the various republics of South America is, we believe, fairly accurate. It has been possible to check many of the figures from the personal observations of our own I. S. A. M. U. missionaries who have travelled extensively over a great part of the Continent, both on the Paraguay and Amazon River systems, in the republics of Argentina, Paraguay, Brazil, Bolivia and Perú.

ARGENTINA. In this republic there are probably not more than 10,000 Indians.

BOLIVIA. Half the population, or about 1,000,000 are pure Indians, in addition to which there are 500,000 of mixed blood in whom the Indian type predominates.

BRAZIL. Government officials place the number of Indians at 1,500,000.

CHILE. There is only one tribe numbering about 60,000.

COLOMBIA. The Government estimate puts the number of Indians at 158,428.

ECUADOR. The bulk of the population, or about 1,200,000 is Indian.

PARAGUAY. If the Guaraní speaking people of Guaraní Indian descent be included, at least 600,000 must be classed as Indian.

PERU. The majority of the population is Indian—about 2,500,000.

VENEZUELA. The number of Indians would probably not exceed 200,000.

According to these estimates there would be about 8,000,000 Indians in South America. Of these, the descendants of the great nations might be roughly estimated at 5,600,000 while the forest Indians and their descendants would number about 2,400,000.

**The Great Indian Nations.** In the republics of Ecuador, Perú, Bolivia and Paraguay the Indian element is in the majority, though it is dominated by the white race. The story of how the Incas were betrayed, massacred and reduced to subjection and despair, has been told by many able writers. The condition of their descendants to-day is one that rouses our pity and admiration; pity at their abject misery and the hopeless look in their eyes, and admiration for their patience and long suffering. They are mostly agriculturists. Their religion is largely a belief in evil spirits, mixed with Roman Catholic ritual. Speaking of these Indians, a recent writer gives the following description of them:

“The Indian’s chief vices are alcohol and coca, both



of which produce terrible havoc. There is not a single feast, civil or religious, not a special occasion of any kind, that is allowed to pass without being celebrated by a drunken orgy, lasting several days. The Indian has become a victim of alcohol, largely because he has been paid for his work in liquor. . . . The priests, too, instead of combating this vice, often encourage and maintain it by means of the religious feasts in which alcohol is the predominating feature.

“Chewing coca enables the Indian to continue working for a number of hours at a stretch without any sense of hunger. The coca leaf is chewed with a mild alkali which, combining with the principle extracted by the saliva, forms small quantities of the alkaloid cocain which deadens sensation. . . . The victim lives in a half-dazed, stupid condition, scarcely aware of what is taking place around him, in fact, almost deprived of his senses.”<sup>1</sup>

Among these semi-civilized peoples no extensive evangelical missionary work is being carried on, except in Paraguay among the Guaranís, where the Inland South America Missionary Union has been in the field for twenty-five years, having occupied many of the strategic centers and established a Training School for the preparation of native pastors. Among the Quechuas and Aymarás a small beginning has been made by three societies, but the vast majority of these peoples is totally unreached.

**A World of Rivers.** Nearly all of the forest Indian tribes are to be found near the headwaters

<sup>1</sup> *Christian Work in South America*, Vol. I, page 169.

of the vast number of rivers that comprise the Amazon, Paraguay and Orinoco systems. The Amazon system drains an area of 2,720,000 square miles, considerably more than one-third of the entire continent, and is twice as great as any other river system in the world. Wallace noted the most striking features of the main stream as, "its vast expanse of smooth water, generally from three to six miles wide; its pale yellowish-olive colour; the great beds of aquatic grass which line its shores, large masses of which are often detached and form floating islands; the quantity of fruits and leaves and great trunks of trees which it carries down and its level banks clad with lofty, unbroken forests."

The current ranges from two to five miles an hour although the average slope in a distance of almost two thousand miles from the Javary to the mouth is only about three-fifths of an inch per mile. The Amazon River system is made up of more than 1,000 streams, with 30,000 miles of navigable waterways. Three of its main tributaries exceed 2,000 miles in length and eight are 1,000 miles long or more. This colossal combine of great rivers drains large sections of no less than five great countries, namely: Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, Perú and Bolivia.

The Amazon presents a peculiar problem, different from that of any other section of South America. There are a few large towns, but the bulk of the white population lives in small settlements placed widely apart and scattered along the

banks of the vast labyrinth of rivers, creeks, inlets, lagoons and intersecting streams which cover the land for many miles on both sides of the main stream. The banks are covered with impenetrable, tropical forest. There is little hinterland and travel by land is generally impracticable in the region of the main stream. The only means of travel is by water, and it is very slow and costly. The upper reaches of practically all the great tributaries are inhabited only by Indians and much of the country they flow through is unexplored. To effectively evangelize the region, the mission stations that may be established will have to be supplemented by motor launches to reach the intervening districts.

There are some 200 Indian tribes in the Amazon valley, but to find many of these it is necessary to journey far up the larger tributaries, sometimes to the headwaters of these streams and beyond the points navigable by launches. The tribes nearest to civilization are small, in some cases numbering but a few hundred. Some of the more distant tribes are large with thousands of members. The field is an exceedingly difficult one, and it is only within the last two years that a real beginning has been made in the task of reaching these Indian tribes. The Evangelical Union of South America has opened a station on the Araguaya River. The Heart of Amazonia Mission has entered Manaus as a base. The Christian and Missionary Alliance have opened a work in the southeast of Perú. The Inland South America

Missionary Union has occupied Iquitos on the upper Amazon in Perú as a base from which to operate. It has also established a station on the headwaters of the Telles Pires at Juruena among the Nhambiquaras and has surveyed the headwaters of the Xingú with a view to occupying that region also.

**The I. S. A. M. U. on the Amazon.** The work begun in the Juruena region among the Nhambiquaras will be extended to include the Parecís, Kabexís, Iranches and other tribes to the northwest. Iquitos is one of the greatest strategic centers for Indian work in South America. Although this "jungle city" is 2,200 miles from the mouth of the river Amazon, it has direct communication with the sea and also has excellent telegraph and banking facilities. It is a central point in the midst of thousands of miles of navigable rivers leading in all directions into Perú, Brazil, Ecuador and Colombia. There are Indians of several tribes in the immediate vicinity, but these are few in number, for the great majority of those who once inhabited the district either died as a result of the barbarous methods employed by the rubber gatherers, or fled to regions where they would be safe from the white man. But there are many tribes on the surrounding rivers. The plan is to work out, with Iquitos as a base for communications and for receiving new workers, establishing stations among these tribes. There are between thirty and forty tribes within reach of this center.

**The Great River of the South.** The Paraguay



River system also ranks amongst the greatest in the world, draining 1,250,000 square miles of territory. Its drainage area is equal to that of the Mississippi and greater than that of the Nile. The main stream is navigable for 2,600 miles, in addition to which there are 4,000 miles of navigable tributaries. The river traverses the republics of Paraguay and Argentina and its branches extend far into Brazil and Bolivia. Before the coming of the Spaniards, it was peopled largely by the Tupí-Guaraní Indian nation, whose blood still predominates in Paraguay and whose language continues to be the one most commonly spoken in that inland republic.

Among the Indians of this region two societies are at work. The South American Missionary Society has an industrial mission among the Chaco Indians in Paraguay and Argentina. The Inland South America Missionary Union, besides its extensive work among the Paraguayans of Guaraní stock, has stations among the Terenas and Bororos in Brazil, the Chiquitanos in east Bolivia and has recently succeeded, through native witness, in starting work among the Cainguas in the north-east of Paraguay, a tribe which extends across the border into Brazilian territory in the direction of the Alto-Paraná River, and whose language is Guaraní.

Next to the Guaraní, the Chiquitano tribe is the largest in the Paraguay basin. A missionary survey party of the I. S. A. M. U. journeyed for a month through their territory visiting about forty



towns and villages, some of which had from one to three thousand inhabitants.

There are comparatively few forest tribes outside of the regions watered by these two river systems. Most of the others are on the Orinoco River and its tributaries in Venezuela. There are a few small tribes in the eastern states of Brazil and one, the Arancanian, in Chile.

**Pioneering Problems.** The problems presented by the different tribes vary greatly according to the location of the tribe and the contacts it may have had with civilization. Some tribes are comparatively easy of access, while others can only be reached by long journeys overland, or by river, through wild, uninhabited regions. In the Bororo work it has been necessary for the missionaries to raise most of their own food supplies. The provisioning of Juruena station among the Nhamiquaras in the very center of the continent has been a serious problem. The station is situated on the Central Plateau in the midst of a very unfertile region. The missionaries have made continual efforts to grow supplies but with little success. When they succeeded with great difficulty in coaxing the plants above ground, the ants would clean the patch in a night.

To get food supplies to Juruena, they had to be taken by barge punted up the Seputuba River for ten days, then conveyed on the backs of mules a three weeks' journey. The first part of the mule trail leads through rough, tiger-infested forest land. The Central Plateau is then ascended by a steep

gorge and the journey continued through barren, uninhabited country where it is difficult even to get pasturage for the animals. Heavy rains and a consequent bad condition of the roads may make the overland journey an exceedingly arduous one, lasting a couple of months. The animals frequently get lost, wandering off through the night into the pathless wilderness where only a good tracker can find them. Sometimes they are stampeded at night by prowling tigers. It is a common occurrence for the party to be delayed for several days looking for lost animals.

We at first depended upon the arrangements made by the Government for the provisioning of the stations on the telegraph line, but that proved as unreliable for the missionaries as for the equally unfortunate employees of these isolated telegraph stations and the result was that the missionaries were for months almost without food. The receiving of mail at such out-of-the-way posts is naturally not a very frequent occurrence. Many are the sacrifices which are cheerfully endured by the missionaries in such locations in the early stages of the work. As a work becomes established, the conditions soon improve, but in the pioneer stages hardship and sacrifice must be faced.

The wild tribe is usually scattered in small groups over a large area. Those who live principally by hunting and on edible roots and wild fruits, are nomadic, roaming continually from place to place and never settling long at any one

point. Those who dwell on the rivers and live by fishing usually have semi-permanent villages. As soon as a tribe comes under the influence of civilization the tendency is gradually to settle down in small permanent villages. It will be evident that among the wild tribes the missionary has to face more than ordinary difficulties. The language must be learned and reduced to writing, which is generally a very slow process. The Indians may or may not be willing to aid him in learning it.

At the same time the Indian's confidence must be won. In all cases, only years of patient plodding will produce any result, growth at first being gradual and results comparatively slow to obtain. Among a roving tribe it may take two or three years to gather a small number around a given center. Once a beginning has been made, their confidence won, their language learned and the first few converts gathered out, the whole situation rapidly changes; progress will be no longer slow and no work could be more encouraging. But sometimes the morning is slow to break. No speedy evangelization methods are possible amongst these tribes; they can be won only by real sacrifice and steadfast faith. It is a field for the old-time pioneer.

**Dangerous Tribes.** Many of the tribes are friendly and easily approached; others are hostile and dangerous. In all cases there is a deep-rooted distrust of the white man, born of centuries of abuse. The Bororos are no longer dangerous, but

they still resist all influences from without and hold most tenaciously to the old institutions. They believe that the spirit that created them dwells in the deer and that they are essentially different from and superior to all other races.

The Nhambiquaras must be approached with caution for they do not yet consider themselves at peace with the white man and are ready to kill at the slightest provocation, real or imagined. The missionaries amongst them have several times been in danger of their lives. On one occasion an Indian demanded an axe without offering anything in exchange. The missionary, Rev. Arthur Tylee, refused because it is our policy not to pauperize the Indians. The Indian was angered and put a knife to the missionary's throat. The latter, pushing the knife away, remained calm, confident in God. The Indian's anger as quickly cooled and he left the house. Though dangers abound in pioneer work amongst such a people, God's presence and protection are real indeed.

**Language Difficulties.** The language problem is one of the greatest that has to be faced in the evangelization of the Indians. Each tribe has its own language and it is very seldom that two tribes are found whose languages are sufficiently alike that they can understand each other. The several hundred Indian languages may be divided into a few linguistic groups and many can be traced to a common source. This, however, is of little or no practical value to the missionary. The languages of any group vary more radically, owing to the



absence of the knowledge of writing, than do the different European languages of Latin origin.

An Indian language is continually changing. Even in a single generation noticeable changes may have taken place. Among the Terenas, the children, their parents and the old people, all have variations of their own in words and pronunciation. The old people know many words unknown to the younger generation, while the latter has changed the meaning of words and introduced new expressions. The New Testament translated into the Guaraní of last century is of little practical value to-day because it is no longer understood by the people.

Captain Whiffin noted this tendency to continual change among the tribes which he visited on the northwest tributaries of the Amazon. He says, "What was the common word yesterday is possibly forgotten to-day. . . . These people are in a state of flux. Disintegration is the determinant influence; nothing makes for amalgamation. A section of a tribe, isolated from the remainder, surrounded by neighbours whose speech, whose physical features, are different, may develop into a distinct tribe with dialect and customs as variant from the parent tribe as from those in its new vicinage."

**Winning the Indian's Confidence.** To win the Indian's confidence and reach him effectively, the missionary must learn his language. A Jesuit missionary to the Indians of Brazil has said: "Learn the Indian's language and you have conquered



him." In most cases he was right. The Indian will always consider as an outsider any one who cannot speak his language. The names by which the Indians call their tribes always mean "The People." "The People" are all those who speak their language; all others are outsiders and potential enemies. Thus, with many tribes, when one learns the language of a tribe, he practically becomes one of them, according to their ideas.

There are some tribes, however, notably the Jivaros, or "Head-hunters" of the Perú-Ecuador frontier, with whom even the learning of their language does not remove the barrier to the stranger. They believe that blood-relationship also means soul-relationship: that all the members of the family and likewise of the tribe, partake of the same personality or soul. Thus if anybody has committed murder, the slaying of any member of the murderer's family will satisfy the avenger, because the whole family is considered to be organically one soul. If a member of another tribe is known to have had a Jivaro ancestor, no matter how far back, he is regarded as still partaking of the Jivaro soul. It is largely because of this belief in the soul unity of the tribe that the Jivaros have so stoutly resisted any association with the white man. The difficulty which this presents to the missionary can readily be seen, for he must remain a rank outsider—a member of another species, in fact—and his message something with no bearing upon the tribe, until a radical change takes place in their thinking.

For the same underlying reasons it is practically impossible, among the wild Indians, for a missionary to work amongst more than one tribe at the same time. The Indians could not think of him as being really friendly to both and he would be looked upon with suspicion by all. When a missionary wins the confidence and friendship of a tribe, they will usually be very jealous of any association he may have with any other tribe. They will try to dissuade him from even visiting them, saying that the others are bad, dangerous, cannibals, etc., all of which is probably untrue.

Conditions Affecting the Missionary. Health conditions vary in different localities. The Central Plateau with an elevation of 3,000 feet, has an agreeable climate, but a severe form of malaria and beri-beri are very prevalent. In the lowlands, the climatic conditions are often adverse, the continuous extreme heat being very trying upon the health, especially upon the nervous system, but in most parts the deadly fevers are not common. On the whole (though there are exceptions) the climate of South America is remarkably equable and healthy. A certain amount of care, however, is always necessary on the part of the missionary. Tuberculosis is common. The vast majority of the civilized peoples and those who have come into contact with civilization are affected with venereal diseases. Amœbic dysentery is fairly common. Goitre is very prevalent in many parts. Elephantiasis is common in some regions. Hook-worm is the scourge of all classes and peo-

ples and leprosy is found wherever civilization has spread. As a rule no attempt is made to segregate the diseased, even the lepers moving about freely.

The field to be occupied is an enormous one and the difficulties to be faced are unusually great, but are not our resources abundantly sufficient? The need and God's provision were thus beautifully summarized by a South American worker, quoted by Dr. McLean of Chile: "Sin, how terrible; grace, how wonderful; time, how short; the Gospel of Christ, how glorious."

### III

## CONDITIONS AMONG THE UNCIVILIZED TRIBES

*“ . . . to loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy chains and let the oppressed go free.”*

—ISAIAH 58:6.

THE forest Indians are scattered throughout Brazil, Perú, Paraguay, Ecuador, Colombia and Argentina. Our information concerning them is far from complete, for there are many regions that have not been investigated. The total number of tribes in South America might be about 300. At the end of last century Wallace counted 300 tribes in the Amazon valley alone. There are not nearly so many in existence in that region at the present day, for many of them have become extinct from various causes, while others, or rather the remnants of them, have been absorbed into the Brazilian population. While the number of semi-civilized Indians is probably increasing, that of many of the forest Indian tribes is steadily diminishing.

Thirty years ago the Parecís tribe in the northern part of the state of Matto Grosso, Brazil, numbered 30,000; to-day there are not 400 of them. A few years ago we came across a couple of ruined huts at a place where eight years before there had been a village of two hundred

Parecís. The site is now desolate and members of the tribe assured us that all but three of these two hundred were dead. Settlers on the upper Paraguay River recall the time when the Barbados and Guatós were large tribes with their villages scattered along the river. There are not a hundred survivors of either tribe now. In the year 1900 first contact was established with a tribe on the upper Madeira, but to-day it also has been reduced to a few score individuals broken in health and spirit. These are extreme cases, but such is the tragic story of many tribes.

**Vanishing Tribes.** But why such appalling mortality among these peoples? It is the old story of the impact of civilized man upon a primitive race. How often have such tragedies sullied the annals of the frontiers of civilization! The battle is to the strong and the race to the swift in a civilization which knows nothing of that brotherly love which only the Gospel of Christ can shed abroad in men's hearts.

The story of the Parecís is typical of that of many of the vanishing tribes. They had the misfortune to dwell in a region in which the forests were rich in rubber trees. The rubber gatherers pushed into the country, establishing centers far into the wilds where the rubber was collected to be sent by mule-back and ox-cart to the headwaters of the Paraguay and Cuyabá Rivers and thence to the nearest towns for shipment to Europe and North America.

General Candido Mariano Rondon, the great



friend of the Indians and Roosevelt's companion on the famous journey into the interior of South America, says of this tribe: "For long they have had relations with the inhabitants of Diamantino, Caceres and Cuyabá, to which towns they came to exchange ipecac and rubber for tools, guns, salt, etc. The exchanges, however, were carried on according to 'lionine' principles; for a lame bullock or an old and defective horse they had to give at least 150 pounds of rubber. Besides this, their docile and inoffensive natures were no protection to them. Often they were pursued and shot down and their villages devastated and burned by the civilized people who acted thus that they might obtain the monopoly of the rubber forests."

The Parecís received the incoming white man well. They were, and still are, a gentle and very hospitable people. Never shall the writer forget the kindness with which he and his companions were received when visiting their villages. The rubber-gatherers employed them to collect the rubber, and, alas, the Indians soon found that their liberty was gone. They were induced to get into debt, were paid in great part in rum and charged extortionate prices for anything they received. Ignorant of the white man's ways, unable to read and having no knowledge of figures, they were at the mercy of their masters. Their debts could never be paid and when a man died who was held to be owing money to his employer, his wife and children were held in payment. Thus



### THREE TYPES OF SOUTH AMERICAN INDIANS

*Left:* A Bororo. *Center:* Indians of the Xingú Headwaters. *Right:* A Nhamiquara Lad.



a most cruel system of slavery was established amongst them. They were treated as slaves, placed in the stocks in the tropical sun and flogged that they might gather more rubber. Syphilis and other venereal diseases were introduced amongst them. Tuberculosis and epidemic diseases soon spread amongst the tribe and within ten years only a small remnant was left.

**Fatal Customs.** Some of their own customs, when the old tribal life was disorganized, contributed towards the disaster which overtook them. In common with most other tribes they killed many of their children at birth. It was their custom to live in enormous, well-constructed grass huts, capable of accommodating sixty to a hundred people. The hut was divided into sections for the different families and everything was clean and orderly, but when disease appeared, there was nothing to prevent it from spreading rapidly through the whole community. When a death occurred in the hut, the body of the deceased was buried within the hut directly underneath the place where his hammock was hung. These graves are easily distinguishable by the sunken places in the floors of the huts.

Now the Parecís are free from the exploitation of the rubber-gatherers. When the boom in the price of rubber subsided most of the work ceased, though a number of centers are still operated. Since the telegraph line was constructed linking the Paraguay and Amazon systems, the Indians in the immediate vicinity have enjoyed the pro-

tection of the Brazilian Government. But it would almost seem too late. They are still dying off rapidly for their physique has been undermined and their spirit broken. Only the Gospel can save them.

**Slavery and the Rubber Trade.** The system of slavery which was practiced amongst the Parecís is widespread throughout the interior of South America. Not only Indians but South Americans of European descent or of mixed blood are often the victims. On one occasion when we were travelling in the north of Matto Grosso State, on the watershed between the Amazon and Paraguay systems, an elderly Brazilian peasant entered our camp and begged us to employ him and take him with us for at least a short distance. He told us he had escaped from a rubber station a week's journey south, where he had been a virtual slave. On the following day two armed men appeared and demanded that the fugitive be delivered to them. They had been sent by his employer to track him down. He trembled with fear in their presence, for if they had secured him they would probably have murdered him by the way. We took him with us a week's journey and he afterwards obtained employment on the telegraph line. He professed conversion later when I. S. A. M. U. missionaries opened a work among the Nhamiquara Indians in that region.

Many of the rubber stations are still equipped with stocks, dark-room and whipping pole. We once camped at one of them on an expedition



among the Indians. The inevitable rum was continually being distilled. An old negro came in from his lonely beat in the rubber forest, half dead with fever. The agent in charge of the station treated him like a dog and was unwilling even that we should give him medicine. It was said by others employed on the station that the old man would simply be left to die as he was too old and sick to be of any further use. Yet the white man shudders at the cruel customs of the Indian!

The following description of the working of the slave system among the Indians of Perú appears in the official report of the Congress on Christian Work held in Montevideo in 1925:

"They are cursed with the slave trade also. Large bands of dissolute savages roam through these great forests, killing the protectors of the families and then carrying the women off to sell to white people who own large plantations in these interior regions. This slave trade is encouraged by the whites, who offer large rewards to the savages, and urge them to bring the women and children to them, making as a pretext the desire of saving them from death, to which they have been condemned by witchcraft."<sup>1</sup>

**Why the Indian Hates the White Man.** The atrocities which were committed upon the Indians in the Putumayo region of Perú during the rubber boom are well known and were thoroughly substantiated by the commission of investigation sent out by the British Government under the leader-

<sup>1</sup> *Christian Work in South America*, Vol. I, p. 170.

ship of Sir Rodger Casement. The fiendish practices then engaged in have no doubt ceased in that district, but the system of slavery still persists.

Professor W. C. Farabee of Harvard gives some interesting facts regarding the system on the headwaters of the Upper Amazon. The following is typical:

"We made a journey of several months to visit the brother of Sr. Scharff, who had a place and several hundred Indians on the upper Piedras River, but before we could reach him, he was killed. He had been in the habit of sending a white man with some Indians to bring in men of another tribe. The methods were often barbarous; a few Indians would be captured, more killed, and the rest put to flight. Just before his death, Scharff (the brother) sent some of his Amahuaca Indians alone, armed with Winchester rifles, to capture a tribe a long distance away. It was the first opportunity these Indians ever had to retaliate, and they decided to make good use of it. Making preparations for a long absence, they soon returned, killed Scharff and his ten white employees, and burned the place. The report soon reached the other rubber men and Sr. Baldimero Rodriguez, with whom we had spent several weeks on one of our voyages, went over to learn what had become of all the rubber and other effects belonging to Scharff. The details will never be known, for he and all of his men were killed, and no white man has since risked a visit. The brother who was killed was the most notorious of all the rubber gatherers in the upper Amazon region."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Papers of the Peabody Museum, Harvard University, Vol. X, pp. 109, 110.

A sad case occurred among the Terenas recently. Luiz and his wife, Maria, were persuaded by the spacious promises of an agent to accept employment on a plantation for which he was seeking labourers. Luiz was a local preacher in the church and Maria was also a church member. She was the daughter of Honorio, a deacon and one of the first converts, and had been brought up in the Mission School. They took their baby and in company with some others, Indians and Brazilians, accompanied the agent. Some months later Luiz, very ill with malaria, returned with the baby. They had been taken to a place many leagues off the beaten track where they found themselves virtually slaves, with little food and no money, in a malarious region. Before long both contracted malaria and, being unable to endure it any longer, they made up their minds to escape. With practically no provisions they started out upon their long journey on foot, carrying their baby. Both of them were weak and Maria's fever increased on the way. They managed to reach the house of a Brazilian farmer when they were both well-nigh exhausted with fever and fatigue.

The Brazilian treated them with great kindness, fed them and secured medical attention for them at his own expense. But it was too late to save Maria's life. Her strength had been exhausted by the journey and she died shortly after their arrival. We were glad to hear afterwards that a Brazilian army officer connected with the Society for the Protection of the Indians, who happened to be sur-

veying in the region and heard of what had taken place, visited the plantation and broke up the establishment. Unfortunately, very few of such establishments are so satisfactorily disposed of.

**The Indian and Civilization.** The samples of civilization with which the Indians usually come first and closest into contact are the riff-raff of the country, often of an incorrigible criminal class that has been forced to flee the cities and find a refuge in the backwoods where the enforcement of law is almost non-existent and they are able with impunity to give free rein to their passions. These people know no restraint, except that which comes as a psychological outcome of the fact that everybody is armed with knife and revolver and is equally ready to use them.

Through contact with this type many of the Indian tribes have become affected with venereal diseases, maladies which previously were unknown amongst them and which have an even more disastrous effect upon the pure Indian than upon the white or the half-cast. Some tribes have been affected more than others. The Terenas have preserved themselves freer from these diseases than most tribes owing to the strictness of their old tribal laws governing intermarriage. The Bororos on the Sao Lourenço River are in a pitiable condition. In a group of these Indians it is often possible to detect signs of venereal disease in the majority. Some tribes have been almost exterminated by these diseases.

The Indians who have thus come into contact



with civilization are an entirely different people from the true denizens of the forest. The latter are free, brave, self-reliant, independent, proud and dignified. Under the influence of a godless civilization, they become degenerate, degraded, diseased, indolent and spiritless. In this pitiful condition they often appear at some of the small ports of call for passenger steamers on the rivers in the interior, sometimes helping to load the boats, for which service they are usually paid in rum and tobacco; at other times they will beg the passengers to throw them bread for which the poor creatures will scramble. Not infrequently have we seen passengers amuse themselves by trying to strike the almost naked bodies of the women with the bread they threw. They are only "Indios—animales!" It is the degenerate Indian that is met with by most travellers in South America. The truly uncivilized Indians are seen by few for they inhabit regions far removed from the routes of travel and trade.

**Common Diseases.** The changes brought about when the Indians forsake the old, free life of hunting and fishing in the open air and begin to congregate in villages, living in wretched, unsanitary huts, have favoured the spread of that great scourge of humanity, tuberculosis. One of the sad things about life among the Indians is to see one after another, often men and women in the prime of life, fall victims to this terrible disease. Not understanding their sickness, they will generally live in a way most calculated to hasten its fatal



course, and knowing nothing of the danger of contagion, they take no precautions against the spread of the disease.

Smallpox as an epidemic has occasionally caused great loss of life among them, but the measles is a more deadly disease. The white man has evidently become inoculated against the latter, so that to him it is a trifling matter, but not so the forest Indian to whom it is an entirely new sickness. We have seen a heavy toll taken in a tribe by an epidemic of measles which had been purposely introduced among them by white men.

An interesting account is given by the Terenas of how a portion of the tribe was saved during a smallpox epidemic which swept through southern Matto Grosso after the Paraguayan war. At that time the tribe was settled some thirty leagues south of its present center. When the first cases of the sickness appeared, the Indians believed it to be the work of an evil spirit that had come amongst them, so most of the people fled in terror abandoning the village and the sick ones. A pathetic story is told of the flight and the search for a place of concealment from the evil spirit of the sickness. Believing that this evil spirit sallied forth to its work of death only during the daytime, and that it never entered the forests, but wandered in the open glades and valleys, the fugitives travelled at night, carefully avoiding all open spaces and, at the first signs of dawn, camping far in the depths of the forest. Thus they continued their journey until they considered they had gone beyond the limits

of the region in which the evil spirit of the sickness dwelt. This action proved a most effective method of isolation and saved the tribe from disaster.

Since the year 1918, a new scourge has placed an important part in reducing the number of Indians. The influenza epidemic of that year did not spare even the wildest tribes farthest removed from civilization. The number of Indians that have died then and since that time of "flu" will never be known. It is safe to say that many thousands perished. The Bororo tribe was reduced by at least one-fourth. The Parecís and Nhamiquaras probably lost a larger proportion. Once more the Terenas escaped with only a few deaths, but this time it was as a result of the Mission Hospital that was opened amongst them. The Christian Indians, led by the chief of the tribe, united in prayer for protection against the sickness, and there were very few deaths amongst the tribe, although a heavy toll was taken in near-by civilized communities.

**Cruel Customs.** Not to be overlooked as important factors contributing towards the destruction of the Indian race are their tribal wars and many of their most universal customs. The killing of women and children on the charge of having been responsible in some way for the death of their men-folk is commonly practiced by some tribes on the upper Amazon. Some club to death or abandon their old people when they become too feeble to engage in hunting, though others take good care of the aged, considering them wise and

their counsel of great value. Probably all the wild tribes practice infanticide to some extent. In many cases, when twins are born, one of them, preferably a girl, is killed. In certain tribes the birth of twins is considered to be positive proof of infidelity, and even the mother's life may be demanded. When a mother dies leaving a suckling child, it is the custom of some, as among the Lenguas in the Chaco, to bury the infant alive with the body of the mother. The infants are also disposed of by drowning, clubbing or abandoning in the forest. Farabee reports that among the Witoto, when both parents die, their children, even up to eight years of age, are buried alive with them. That, however, is most uncommon and not at all characteristic of the Indian, for as a rule, except in the case of an infant at the breast, an orphan is welcome in almost any home and is well treated.

In the great majority of cases, when a weakly or deformed child is born, it is killed immediately. One such case came under the writer's observation among the Terenas. A child was born in the hut of two old witch-doctors, a man and wife, across the street from the little church in Bananal. The infant was found to have a cleft palate so the witch-doctor woman, without consulting the mother, decided to follow the ancient custom and do away with the child. She first poured hot water into its mouth, no doubt to drive out the evil spirit which was supposed to be the cause of the deformity, and then buried it in a shallow grave at the back of her hut. Some of the Christian Indians found out

what had happened and dug the child up while it was yet breathing.

When we entered the hut, we found the infant lying unheeded on the floor, wrapped in the blood-stained, earth-stained cloth in which it had been buried. Some feet away the mother lay in a dying condition, too ill to be concerned about her child. A Christian Indian picked up the little bundle and revealed to us a sight that made our hearts burn with pity and indignation. The body of the newborn babe was smeared with the clay of the grave, and much of the skin of the mouth, face, neck and breast had been destroyed where the hot water had passed, laying bare the flesh. We did what we could for it and an old Christian Indian woman, whose heart Christ had changed, mothered it with the tenderest care, but it had been too badly scalded and lived but a few hours. The witch-doctor woman was much incensed at our interference. While we were in the hut she squatted on the floor, an inscrutable expression on her face, and muttering to herself now and then.

Although infanticide is the general custom, there are exceptions, and occasionally (and only in some tribes) mothers are to be found, especially those who are well treated by their husbands, who have comparatively large families. Among some tribes, however, as in the case of the Bororos, the mother has no choice in the matter, for the village medicine-man decides whether the child is to die before it is born and carries out his decree with his own hands.



**Indian Ethics.** The Indians need not be judged too harshly in this respect. According to their own ideas, they are very indulgent and affectionate with their children. No mother could have been prouder of her child than the Bororo woman who brought her new-born babe to show us. She had already painted the whole of its body red, drawn black ornamental lines on its face and stuck white, downy feathers on its little head, arms, shoulders and breasts. We had to admit it looked cute. It is not surprising that their reasoning is at times difficult for us to follow, as for instance when they consider that to strike a child in punishment is too cruel to be thought of, yet will hold it in the smoke of a wood-fire until it is nearly smothered.

According to the crude ethics of a barbarous people, the custom of infanticide is not so cruel as it appears to us. They do not permit the deformed child to live, partly from Spartan principles, partly because there is no medical aid to resort to and partly because they believe the deformity to be the work of an evil spirit that has taken up its abode in the body of the infant. They sometimes excuse the custom of infanticide by saying that it is not cruel to kill their children at birth because in so doing they save them from the hard life which is the lot of the Indian.

Many of them are forced to be continually on the march, roaming through their vast domains, hunting and fishing. As a rule the woman acts as the beast of burden and has to carry on her back all the family possessions, on the top of which, or



on her hip, she carries her baby. It is physically impossible for her to carry more than one child, so she does not let another live until the first is able to walk. The men usually carry nothing but their weapons, claiming that they must be unencumbered so that they may be ready for the chase or to defend themselves and their women-folk from lurking enemies. We have come across tribes, however, especially where there is not the immediate danger of attack from a hidden foe, where the men carry an equal share of the burdens, and even at times help to carry the children.

**Does the Indian Show Affection?** Some writers, whose acquaintance with the Indians has been limited to a journey through their territory, have made the statement that they do not show much affection for the living and grieve little for the dead. Such an idea arises from a lack of understanding of their character and customs and is entirely mistaken. There are occasions when custom does not permit any show of grief, as among the Witoto Indians, where a man may not mourn the loss of his wife, although a wife is not restricted in giving outward evidence of her sorrow when her husband dies. No human being is more wedded to custom than the Indian and few can so effectively hide any signs of emotion—that is, to those who do not understand him. Visiting missionaries, unaccustomed to the Indians, have found it an ordeal to preach to our Terena congregation, for they could not detect a sign of response in the faces of the audience. Yet the sermon had been greatly appreciated and after-

wards many of the listeners could have repeated it almost word for word.

Barbarous the forest Indian certainly is, with crude ethics and cruel customs, but beneath the crust of custom, superstition and ignorance there is a heart as warm and tender, as capable of affection, joy or sorrow as that of any civilized man. Indeed when due allowance is made for the savage, cannot the highest civilization show instances of more heartless cruelty than the Indian was ever guilty of?

Never shall we forget the scene which we witnessed in a little temporary Indian village on the central watershed of the continent. One of the chiefs of the Nhambiquaras asked us to go to see his wife, who was sick, and give her medicine. He was a wild-looking fellow, naked, with a feather ornament stuck in his nose and his bobbed hair in a tangled mass. He had been struggling to make us understand how he planned to attack an enemy village, kill the men and take the women prisoners. We found his wife very ill. She lay naked on the sand in the open air, her head pillowed on a gourd, with half a dozen palm leaves stuck in the ground at one side to shelter her from the heat of the sun. Her body was wasted almost to a skeleton and dirty and her hair matted. She looked weary and hopeless. So far as we could understand, her illness had resulted from childbirth a month previous.

We were helpless to do anything for her. When we told the chief so, he uttered not a word, but we

could see his disappointment. Later on he came to our camp and begged us to give him some food for her. This we gladly did though we could spare but little as our stock was low and we were six weeks' journey from the nearest place where it could be replenished. Utter savage though he was, that chief showed affectionate concern for his sick wife and would have been deeply grateful if we had been able to do anything to alleviate her suffering or cure her of her sickness.

**Tribal Wars.** Many of the tribes are warlike and often engage in the most bloody feuds. Sometimes they fight over territory, at other times to avenge the death of one of their tribe, and not seldom for the pure love of fighting. Some of the exploits of the great war chief, Alexandre, of the Terenas, give a good idea of the kind of warfare that was carried on. When the writer commenced his missionary service among the Terenas in 1916, Alexandre was still living, an old white-haired man, bent upon a stick and dressed in an old colonel's uniform which the Brazilian Government had presented to him in recognition of the services he had rendered during the war with Paraguay. His fighting days were done.

When the Paraguayan war was over and there was no more fighting to be done, Alexandre became restless and longed to be on the war-path again. Calling his braves together in a council of war, it was decided to make an expedition against the Chumococos who live on the eastern side of the river Paraguay. The long journey of about two

hundred miles was made and Alexandre invaded the territory of the Chumococos. The latter, however, having heard somehow of the coming of the Terenas and being afraid of them, decided not to give battle and abandoned their villages, retreating farther inland. The Terenas hunted for them, visiting village after village, but all were deserted. It finally became evident that the search was in vain, so Alexandre held another war-council. The question was, who would they fight, seeing that the Chumococos were not to be found, for they did not wish to return home so ingloriously. Every warrior wished to add at least one more death to his credit.

The only other tribe in the region were the Lenguas in the Paraguayan Chaco to the south. But the Lenguas had long been friendly with the Terenas, and, moreover, they were a very strong tribe and Alexandre was dubious about attacking them. However, there were no others to fight, so the following plan was arranged and carried out. An invitation was sent to a group of Lenguas to come to the Terena camp to visit the great chief Alexandre. Trusting to Indian hospitality and not suspecting treachery, the Lenguas came and all squatted upon the ground to talk. One of the Lenguas carried an old muzzle-loading rifle, for which a Terena brave purposely offered in exchange something that was considered of much less value. The Terena pressed his point until the matter developed into a quarrel, then, at a given signal and without any warning, the Terenas seized their



weapons and massacred all the Lenguas before they could retaliate.

After such an act, Alexandre feared the vengeance of the rest of the Lengua tribe, so he turned his steps homeward. He was still not satisfied, however, and could not settle down with his people, so he led his warriors forth again, this time to the north, to the country of the Bororos, four hundred miles distant. In due time the Bororo country was reached. On one dark night, the Terena warriors silently surrounded one of their villages and then, suddenly, uttering their war cry, fell upon the unsuspecting Bororos, killing all except two girls whom they carried off prisoners. They continued their journey, attacking a number of Bororo villages, with varied success, until, after several months of roaming and fighting, they tired of war for the time and returned home. The two girl prisoners were treated kindly and adopted into the tribe. They married Terenas and one of them died recently in Bananal.

Three years ago, when the new work among the Bororo Indians was being opened up, the Terena Church sent one of their number to help in the evangelization of those they had at one time sought to destroy. It is such things that put the joy into missionary work among the Indians and make it abundantly worth while.

**The Only Remedy.** How many Indians there were in South America when the Continent was first discovered, it is impossible to tell, but there must have been many millions more than there



are to-day. There are still, however, some ten millions of them left, and the outlook is by no means hopeless from a missionary standpoint. It would be a mistake to think that the whole Indian race in South America is doomed inevitably to extinction. In the first place, not all of the tribes are dying out; it is the more savage forest tribes that have been most seriously affected; and, in the second place, there is no doubt that those threatened with extinction could be saved.

But the fact remains that, left as they are, many more tribes will soon become extinct. It has been proved that the Gospel can save a dying tribe from extinction. The Terena Indians were decreasing in number when mission work was first started amongst them fourteen years ago, but now the number of children in Bananal is remarkable and it is evident that the population is increasing. The Indians are worth saving as a race, from a spiritual standpoint, for their admirable characteristics and for their potential value to the countries in which they live. Their present condition is a challenge to the Christian Church for courageous and speedy action.

## IV

### THE METHOD OF APPROACH

*"It pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe."*—I CORINTHIANS 1:21.

**W**HAT are the best methods to employ in seeking to win the Indians for Christ? How may their confidence best be gained, their habits changed and their social, economic and spiritual problems solved? These vital questions are naturally uppermost in the minds of those whose hearts God has burdened for the salvation of that neglected race.

On a small scale, all the methods usually adopted in the mission field have been employed among the Indians. Preaching, the translation of the Bible into the vernacular, medical work, educational and industrial work, all undoubtedly have a place in the carrying out of the great task, and the problem is not so much to decide as to their usefulness as to successfully correlate and apply them. Medical, educational and industrial work, however admirable and necessary in themselves, are only useful to the messenger of the Gospel in so far as they are subordinated to, and aid in the accomplishment of, the one supreme object.

It might seem so obvious that the direct evangelical appeal must occupy the central place in

missionary work that it would not require to be emphasized, but the temptation to develop the humanitarian and social branches of the work, so much more appreciated by the natives, is great. The need and opportunities for social service are unlimited and naturally they make a strong appeal, especially when the response to the spiritual message is meager and definite results are slow to obtain. Thus it is that, unfortunately, what should have been merely an aid has come in so many cases to usurp the time and energy of the missionary almost to the exclusion of that which is most essential and for the doing of which he was called and sent.

**The Gospel's Power.** Nothing can take the place of the Gospel message, nor is anything needed, for it is "the power of God unto salvation" to all who believe. It is marvellous how it can be understood by the primitive Indian. Truly, it is a universal message, adapted to the needs of all races and all degrees of civilization. The most primitive mind needs no preparation for it, other than that which the Holy Spirit effects. There is a power inherent in the Gospel which is sufficient in itself to enlighten the mind of the crudest savage and produce in him deep spiritual understanding and a genuine change of heart; indeed the manner in which the essentials of spiritual truth can be grasped by such an one is sometimes almost startling.

On one occasion, when pointing a young Indian to Christ, the writer struggled almost despairingly

in a language of which the Indian knew little to explain certain fundamental truths. Not long afterwards he was surprised to discover, when again speaking with the young man, that he had grasped much more of the significance of these truths than it had been thought possible to attempt to explain. The Holy Spirit had revealed the Truth to him and given him a spiritual perception that was beyond human power to impart.

Miracles of Grace, such as are recorded in *Down in Water Street* or *Twice-Born Men*, are repeated amongst the Indians. It is worthy of remark that the results have not always been in proportion to the apparent intelligence of the individual. An Indian from a distant village who entered the church for the first time one Sunday evening was noted by us as having the coarsest, most unintelligent face we had seen. When the invitation was given at the close of the service, he immediately indicated his desire to follow Christ, but we were doubtful, thinking it hardly possible that he could have understood sufficient to really know what he was doing. Our lack of faith, however, was rebuked, for his conversion was genuine and he became a strong Christian. He got one of the older Christians to teach him to read and began studying the Bible. Later, he became a local preacher. A year after his conversion, his whole appearance had so marvellously changed that one could hardly recognize him as the same man. It seemed that even the shape of his face had altered for it showed character and intelligence.

Physically, mentally and spiritually, he was a radically changed man.

**The Native Witness.** The first results amongst a tribe are the most difficult to obtain, but when a beginning is made, the converts themselves become the most successful soul-winners, and the missionary is wise who takes advantage of that fact by training them to witness. The women, owing to their natural shyness and conservatism, are in the beginning harder to influence, though usually they are finally won through the testimony of their husbands and brothers. When one person in a family professes conversion, it not infrequently happens that ultimately most if not all of the family will be won.

Among all peoples, it is the native worker who gets results most easily. The missionary to the Indians must always be one of another race, different. He will be respected and beloved but he can never quite understand or be understood as an Indian would. The men are very ready to learn to preach and some of them learn to give excellent messages. The chief problem which they present arises from their roving instincts. They cannot settle long to hard plodding or routine work, but will become restless and lose interest; however, by carefully watching them and occasionally varying their task or sending them on a preaching tour to a distant village, they may be kept contented and render valuable service.

The Indians respond to a democratic form of church organization. It corresponds roughly to



their own system of tribal government and is readily understood. Most tribes are accustomed to meet in council, when usually anybody who cares to may give his views on the subject under consideration. The church business meeting, therefore, is appreciated, although modern parliamentary rules of procedure amuse them greatly. Men elected to offices in the church are usually wisely chosen and perform their duties faithfully and with dignity.

**Healing the Sick.** As an aid to winning souls and demonstrating the love of Christ, nothing is more universally approved, for its own sake and because of the example set by the Master, than medical work. Among the Indians, it helps to break down prejudice and open hearts to the Gospel. It has forced many who were bitterly opposed to the missionary's message to seek his aid, and thus gives him the opportunity he desires to show his sympathy and love for them. It also aids gradually to bring into disrepute the barbarous methods of the medicine-man. Among some tribes, it is indispensable if they are to be saved from destruction as a result of the ravages of diseases which they have contracted from the white man.

Among such a primitive people the medical worker is confronted with peculiar difficulties. To correctly diagnose and treat a case, a knowledge of Indian psychology is almost as necessary as a knowledge of medicine. "I went to a *curandeiro*" (quack doctor), said one of our patients, "but he did not know anything for he asked me a lot of

questions. He did not know what my sickness was so he tried to get me to tell him." To question such a case without rousing his suspicions as to one's qualifications requires considerable tact.

Believing that the doctor is able to discern by some sort of magic the most deep-seated and invisible trouble, the Indian is often ready to give assent to whatever opinion he may seem to indicate. For that reason questions must be carefully constructed. If one asks "You have a headache, have you?" the reply almost invariably will be "Yes"; but if the question is put thus: "You do not have a headache, do you?" the answer is just as certain to be in the negative. Even if the two questions are asked in succession, the answers will flatly contradict each other.

The Indian considers that a serious problem requires long and careful thought. A young missionary among a North American tribe was asked for advice on a certain matter by an Indian and immediately gave his opinion. The Indian looked at him gravely and said: "When we wish to decide upon an important matter we consider it for a long time. An opinion so hastily formed as yours cannot be of any value." This is a characteristic which it behooves both doctor and pastor to keep in mind.

It is difficult for the Indian to understand that healing may be a more or less gradual process, and one is often discouraged by a patient stopping the treatment at the critical moment because it has failed to cure him in a day or two. A remedy also

should not cause inconvenience. One man preferred to lie in his hammock for a month rather than endure the pain of a poultice drawing at a wound in his foot. "That remedy hurts," he said, "so I do not want any more of it." A father was given medicine for his child and told to administer a dose in warm milk each morning for a week. The child received only one dose for the heating of the milk was too much trouble.

**Causes of Infant Mortality.** The most elementary principles of hygiene are totally undreamt of, and when insisted upon are often regarded as unnecessary inconveniences. The food is usually poor in quality and very often scarce, and the clothing is the scantiest possible. On cold winter days the people are too miserable to work and they crouch together around a fire or in some sheltered spot where they will be protected from the keen south wind and yet able to get what warmth the sun is giving. We have known them to sit huddled around their fires all night unable to sleep. Such a life takes heavy toll of the little children and makes tuberculosis the scourge of the adults.

A large percentage of the patients treated are infants and young children. The infant mortality is extremely high. The mothers have no knowledge of how to guard their children from sickness or care for them when they are ill. An epidemic of sickness among the children is always a heart-breaking experience for the missionary. In many cases he is not called until it is too late and the medicine-man has already admitted failure. Even

when there are reasonable prospects of effecting a cure, he may have to engage in a losing fight against the carelessness of the mother, due, not to lack of love for her child, but to ignorance and a natural prejudice against anything that goes contrary to established custom.

**Working Under Difficulties.** Sometimes the open hostility of relatives of the patient adds to the difficulty of the task. We were called to such a case late one night by a young Christian man, the only convert in a large family, whose brother had cut his foot with an axe. The accident had happened at noon and we were told that the wound was still bleeding. The fact that the young man had succeeded in getting his mother to accept our treatment, and that he had ridden out in the night for help made it sufficiently plain that the case was urgent, so we made all haste to get horses ready and be off.

We were led to a part of the village where the people were mostly opposed to the Gospel. The hut was a very primitive one. The ridge-pole of the thatched roof was only eight feet high and thin layers of grass served as walls. There were a dozen people inside, men, women and children. Some had already lain down to sleep while others were squatting around a fire in the middle of the floor. The boy was lying on a raw-cowhide, a dirty rag laid over the wounded foot.

The women did not welcome us, and the mother tried to prevent us from removing the blood-soaked rag from the foot. The Christian brother was the



only one present who had any faith in us. While we washed and dressed the wound the mother wailed in a high-pitched voice and an old woman, sitting on the floor, probably the grandmother, broke into a weird chant, swaying her body from side to side. As the foot healed, the mother became less unfriendly and finally her confidence was won completely. Sometime afterwards the other two of her sons professed conversion, and no doubt she also will be won some day.

The medical work is not without an occasional touch of humour. A young woman had received treatment for snakebite. She had been bitten in the hand by one of the most poisonous snakes and had made a remarkable recovery, due to answered prayer. Several months later she came with her hand bandaged and held as if it were paining her. She first presented us with a brick of cane sugar, and then removed the bandage. In a trembling voice she told us that the sickness had returned to her hand, and that she also had pain in her head and stomach. When we examined the hand we found that the back was covered with a light blue check pattern identical with that of the print dress she was wearing. While taking her midday nap the perspiring hand had lain on the cheap cloth and unfortunately the dye was not fast!

The Indian does not always show gratitude for the medical help received, being inclined to take it as his due, much as a child would, but though this branch of the work has its discouragements and difficulties, these are far outweighed by the



joy of serving those who are so needy. The reward is in seeing souls brought into touch with the Great Physician, and in finding that, through the deceased infant mortality in a village, the children are increasing in number and the tribe need no longer fear extinction.

**Educating the Indian.** A most necessary adjunct to the work of evangelizing a primitive and illiterate people is the elementary school. It is of the greatest importance to the success and permanence of a work that the converts and their children learn to read the Word of God. A Christian community that is unable to read for itself God's Word must ever remain dependent upon the missionary and could never become self-propagating and self-governing. The change which takes place in all cases of true conversion is profound, though in some cases it is more marked than in others. One of the first noticeable effects is a desire for self-improvement. The mind is stimulated, the character strengthened and the inward spiritual impulse is upward and forward. To provide the means for the realization of the new aspirations awakened by the presence of God's Spirit is the sacred duty of the missionary, who must fill the place not only of evangelist but also of pastor and teacher.

Reading and writing seem nothing less than magic to the savage who has never dreamed of such a way of conveying words. An Indian was sent with provisions to a Mission Station and was given a letter to deliver to the missionary-in-charge.



### A STUDY IN CONTRASTS

*Left:* Pareci Indian Woman and Child. *Right:* Terena Christian—with a Nambiquara Heathen.



On the way the Indian stole some of the provisions and while he was doing so placed the letter under a log. He knew that the letter carried information regarding the supplies he was taking and he argued that, if he covered it up so that it could not see what he was doing, it would not know what had taken place and would be unable to inform against him. His belief in the magical powers of the letter was only strengthened when he found that the missionary who received the supplies knew exactly how much he had stolen.

When one young Indian who had been studying assiduously for some days finally found the mystery of writing solved, when he was able to write a simple word, he rose to his feet and danced for sheer joy. The converts are usually eager to learn to read the Bible and even more anxious that their children be taught. There are many instances where converts have, on their own initiative and with the help of other Christians, learned to read and studied the Bible until they became remarkably familiar with large portions of it. There are those, of course, who seem unable to learn. Most of the children when they first enter school have dormant minds. Sometimes a child will be unable for months to learn even to form a letter, then suddenly the mind seems to awaken and he or she will make rapid progress. Most of them are of ordinary intelligence, quite capable of receiving an elementary education. A few who are above the average could profit fully from a higher education. Sir Clements Markham's high estimate of the in-

tellectual quality of the Indian has been fully justified by the results obtained in Mission schools.

The governments insist that all schools amongst the Indians be conducted in the official language of the country in which they happen to reside, which is either Spanish or Portuguese. Most of the governments are also opposed to the creation of a literature in the Indian languages. We believe that the position taken by the local governments in this matter is justified. The numerous Indian tribes, some of them small and each with its own distinct language, have no future apart from the countries in which they live. There is really nothing to be gained by encouraging them to remain distinct from the general population of these countries. The comparatively low standard of living among the peasant class of the Latin colonials and the fact that there is no race prejudice or colour barrier in these lands, make it easy for the Indian, once he adopts the ways of civilization, to be absorbed into the general population. There is nothing to hinder him from taking his place, with full privileges, as a useful, Christian citizen of the country in which he resides. From the standpoint both of the Indians and of the governments that would appear to be the best solution to the problem.

In many parts of South America the peasant class already has an admixture of Indian blood. These peoples have been pointed to as an example of the unfortunate results of race fusion, yet such a keen observer as Lord Bryce, after a close study of the facts, came to the conclusion that in South



America "the fusion of two parent stocks, one more advanced, the other more backward, does not necessarily result in producing a race inferior to the stronger parent or superior to the weaker. The mestizo in Perú is not palpably inferior in intellect to the Spanish colonial of unmixed blood, but seems to be substantially his equal."

In our experience, Lord Bryce's observations are correct. In some districts, where the people are markedly progressive, there has been a complete fusion of the two races. Many strong national leaders have had Indian blood in their veins. It would be a distinct advantage to the Indian and no disadvantage to the already mixed population of these countries if ultimately a complete fusion of the two races took place.

**Economic Independence.** The value of industrial work as an aid in the evangelization of the Indians cannot be denied; but it is limited. The Indians, both the savage and semi-civilized, are either pastoral or nomadic, and the life most suited to the taste and temperament of the majority is that of the farm or cattle ranch. The teaching of such improved methods of agriculture and the care of live stock as may be practicable for the Indian in his circumstances is of great value in enabling him to be independent and self-supporting. A few will also readily learn such arts as those of the carpenter, saddler, silversmith, etc., and the encouragement and training of individuals who show ability and initiative along such lines is necessary to the formation of organized village life. But all

such efforts to aid the Indian materially must have as their aim the development of initiative, reliance, and individual independence. Methods which have a tendency to pauperize or mould a whole community according to any given pattern, or shield from the ordinary temptations of life, have proved disastrous. The danger in industrial work is that the missionary or social worker, by endeavouring to foster the growth of character and spirituality by artificial means may effectively prevent their true development by eliminating the very conditions which produce them. All industrial missionary work must have as its purpose, second to the primary objective of conversion, the formation of strong Christian character. "The all important factor in national greatness is national character," said Roosevelt. The future of any Indian people depends upon the development of individual character. There is no character-forming influence to be compared with Christian experience, and Christian experience must be personal, gained through the struggles and triumphs of the individual soul as it rises, under the impulse of the Spirit of God, from the mire of ignorance and sin.

The easiest and most attractive method of giving material aid, especially for a government with ample resources, is to provide the Indians with free clothes, farming utensils, seed, machinery, cattle, or whatever they may seem to require for self-support and progress. Such a method overlooks the fact that no real progress can be attained without moral discipline. The result may be seen in

several tribes who, under this system, have made little progress materially, have lost their spirit of independence, become weakened in character and degraded to a company of lazy beggars, considering it to be their right to receive everything free, showing no appreciation of any service rendered, and being unwilling to exert any effort to improve their condition.

**Problems in Industrial Work.** Another method which has made a strong appeal is to establish a farm on which the Indians may be gathered together and provided with employment. Much can be said in favour of this method. It is the one the Jesuits adopted on a large scale in their missions in Paraguay. The Jesuits succeeded in modifying the customs of whole nations, raising them from savagery to semi-civilization and grafting new religious ceremonies into the life of the people, but the development of personal initiative, independence of thought and action, and strength of character was not merely not encouraged, but effectively prevented. The method was adequate to the Jesuit's purpose. They were satisfied usually with an outward manifestation of religion—the observance of rites and ceremonies—and did not have the higher moral and spiritual objective of the evangelical missionary, and while their work resulted in certain material benefits, the Indians who came under their influence are to-day weaker in character and morally more degraded than they were in their savage state.

We would not infer that a farm or other enter-

prise could not be conducted on lines that would be advantageous to the Indians; there is no doubt that they could, but care would have to be taken not to eliminate the normal influences that combine in the development of character. To make an uncivilized Indian a unit in an industrial institution—a mere spoke in a wheel—is disastrous, for it deprives him of all opportunity for personal achievement, and the development of initiative and self-reliance. The best results seem to be obtained where the Indian is encouraged to care for his own plantation and cattle, build his own house and take full responsibility for the support of himself and his family.

True spiritual religion and Christian character can be developed only by personal experience. That experience cannot be substitutional. The missionary's counsel and example will often turn the scale for victory, but the convert must become strong by fighting his own battles.

As the Indian converts emerge from savagery their progress to civilization will be comparatively slow and it must be natural. At that stage they must be dealt with individually rather than collectively. The temptation is to force growth by artificial means applied to a large group, but the result of such a method is unnatural and greatly disappointing in its final result. The ideal way is to leave the convert with freedom to use his initiative and permit him to solve his problems in his own way, gradually applying the new ideals to his own life and advancing to civilization at his own



speed. Of course, the missionary can and must watch his growth, teaching, advising and encouraging. Each individual has different problems, advances at a different rate of speed and along different lines, and the treatment of each one must be adapted to his special needs. Such a method requires patience, prayer and intelligent work, but its results, though at first apparently slow, are actually more quickly obtained and infinitely superior to those of any other that has yet been tried.

An excellent work with the emphasis placed on the industrial method has been carried on for some time amongst one tribe. At first the results appeared to be encouraging, but now, after a generation of effort, it is found that, though a number have professed conversion, the advance in civilization has been very small and the converts are weak in character and do not stand strong when they leave the influence of the mission station and meet the temptations of the outside world. The attempt to protect the converts from the temptations of the world is often fatal. The Christian who has never faced temptation can never learn to overcome.

**How the Terenas Have Advanced.** The method followed among the Terena Indians has been to encourage the converts to develop their plantations so that, as the fruit of their own individual labour and enterprise, they may produce sufficient to provide food for themselves and their families and have a surplus to sell to obtain money for the purchase of clothes and other necessary



articles. The land on which they are settled is government land reserved for their use. The same method could be followed on land belonging to a missionary organization.

If an individual showed ability to develop along a special line, as a carpenter, saddler, dressmaker, he or she was encouraged to do so. If they were employed for any purpose, they were paid full value for their work. Nothing, with the exception of the ministrations of the Church, medical treatment and the education of their children, was given free. Though the method may have been less spectacular, it has produced the priceless qualities of self-reliance, self-respect and a virile faith built upon personal experience.

Gradually the more progressive of the Christians have improved their conditions, the most potent influence being the example of the missionaries' home life. Most of them dress as well as the Brazilian peasant class. The latest development in home building is a brick-walled tile-roofed house of several rooms. Ox-carts and sewing-machines are beginning to be considered indispensable. The standard of living is slowly but steadily rising. The progress is the direct outcome of individual enterprise stimulated by the Gospel's power and the new ideas are supported by public opinion. The results are neither artificial nor forced. Each convert has faced his problems with God and has a living experience of God's power to meet his individual need. They are not afraid to meet the Brazilians on their own ground to trade or to

testify to their faith, and many of them have borne a faithful witness in hard and lonely places. Though the work has been in progress amongst them for only fifteen years, several strong leaders have been developed and now even the withdrawal of the missionaries would not mean the destruction of the work.

The whole solution to the problem of the emancipation and civilization of the Indians lies in the power of the Gospel. Without that power—the regenerating power of the Holy Spirit—the work would be hopeless, and all human effort useless. First get the Indian saved and then, in the power of the new life within him, he is capable of any degree of material and spiritual progress.

## V

### THE MISSIONARY AND HIS ENVIRONMENT

*"I am made all things to all men that I might by all means save some."*—I CORINTHIANS 9: 22.

THE life of the missionary among the Indians is not as colourful and romantic as it might seem to folk at home. The romantic dreams of the new recruit soon fade before the stern reality of hard work under a tropical sun. The fruits and food of the country, the Indians and their huts and customs, the ox-carts and saddle oxen, the delays and inconveniences,—all of them at first so strange and interesting, presently become just the common, everyday things of life, which attract no more attention than a well-dressed person or a street-car would in the homeland. The real excitement is afforded when some missionary returning from furlough brings a carefully guarded apple or a box of assorted candies, reminding us that such things do exist in a far-off land.

Yet the life of the pioneer does not lack a certain amount of change and variety, though, of course, the routine work—which is the real building work—with its humdrum monotony, always takes the central place. There is much in his life that defies description. He must be able to put his

hand cheerfully and more or less ably to whatever task may confront him. To-day there may be a clear sky, to-morrow the turmoil and stress of storm. Now the missionary may be mastering the secrets of some new craft to which his hand has not been trained and for which his tools must be improvised, then facing a crisis that threatens the very existence of his work. He may be preaching or hoeing, healing the sick or driving an ox-cart, teaching school or building. The one changeless, dependable thing in his experience is the power that makes all work together for good.

**Climatic Conditions.** In a tropical land the working day is from sunrise to sunset. The Indians are usually stirring before dawn. The sun rises early and full advantage must be taken of the cool morning hours. By eleven o'clock in the forenoon the heat has become uncomfortable and from noon until three in the afternoon it is customary for all work to cease; then even the animals seek shelter, retiring into the cool depths of the forest. After sunset little can be done, for swarms of mosquitoes are out on the war-path and as the houses are not screened the only safe retreat is the mosquito net.

In the tropical regions, the year is divided into two seasons: a wet season which lasts approximately from October to March and is also the time of the greatest heat; and a dry season, which prevails during the remaining six months of the year, and in the middle of which comes the short winter. There are about three months of winter, when cold

and warm spells alternate. A change of wind to the south will cause the weather to turn suddenly cold enough for a slight frost to be visible before the sun rises in the morning. The cold wind may blow strongly for a day or two, then it begins to abate and soon the warm north wind has taken its place again. The cold, though not actually severe, is of a particularly penetrating character and some days it is difficult to keep warm even with a heavy overcoat and fire. The houses are constructed for comfort in the hot weather and do not afford much protection from the cold. After the excessive heat of the long summer, the blood is thin and the body not in a condition to resist the cold which is keenly felt. The Indians, especially the children, having no protection other than a fire, suffer much more than we do. Cold weather always affects the attendance at the services and occasionally it is necessary to close school for a day. The people do not care to work in such weather, preferring to remain at home by their fires. They have no idea of creating warmth by exercise, and, indeed, the cold is not of an invigorating character.

During the dry season much of the overland travelling is done. Then the weather is cool, the swamps dry and the rivers low. The only disadvantage is the fact that towards the end of that season everything has become so dry that the grass is withered and it is difficult to find pasture for the animals. In the wet season travelling is difficult and arduous for both man and beast. The sun beats down in pitiless fury and the storms which



sweep over the country flood the rivers and make the swamps impassable. Much of the travelling in that season is done at night by the light of the moon, to avoid the fatigue of the heat by day.

The humidity caused by the excessive evaporation in summer penetrates everywhere, even into boxes and cupboards, and everything made of leather wears a perpetual coat of mould. It is then that the people are busy in their plantations hoeing the weeds which grow apace in the fertile soil. The vegetation becomes rank and luxuriant, the insect, reptile and bird life thrives and multiplies and all nature throbs with an abundant life until it seems to congest and lack room upon the earth for its prodigal increase.

**Tropical Storms.** It is then that the dreaded north wind blows strongest, coming from the heat of the equator, over steaming forest and swamp, blowing for days at a time, driving the birds from the skies and causing the animals to pant in the shade. The perspiration drops from one's chin and fingers even when one is sitting quietly on the veranda. Copious draughts of insipid, lukewarm water, the coolest to be found, fail to quench the ever-present thirst. The body aches as if all the moisture had dried out of it and grace is required to keep tempers smooth.

The climax to such a hot spell is a storm. The heat increases until it seems unbearable, then great clouds gather in the sky, piling up in irregular formations, the roll of thunder is heard in the distance, innumerable frogs in the marshes unite in a

deafening chorus of welcome to the coming rain with all manner of whistlings and croakings, the cattle retire to the forests and a strange stillness pervades the air as the north wind dies away and the weather-vane swings erratically to the fitful gusts.

The sun sets in a blaze of red, edging the dark blotches of storm clouds as with fire. As darkness settles over the land the incessant play of sheet and forked lightning is seen all around the horizon, throwing into relief the fantastic forms of the clouds. Darker and darker the night becomes; the edge of the storm, blacker than the night, stretches across the sky, rising rapidly higher and higher, blotting out the few remaining stars. A low moan comes from the direction of the storm, a gust of wind stirs the leaves on the tree tops, and a welcome puff of cooler air strikes one's cheek; then a blinding flash and the crash of a thunderbolt near by, a few drops of rain strike the roof and with a shriek the storm is upon us, and the lightning flashes and the rain descends as they do only in the tropics.

In the morning the storm has passed; the air is cooler and all nature is refreshed. Mud everywhere has taken the place of dust, sheets of water lie in the hollows and little rivulets and dried up creeks have become swollen torrents spreading far beyond their banks.

There is something magnificent and strangely fascinating about an approaching storm. As it sweeps onward with a rush and roar of fury, a

seething, howling mass of blackness, stabbed by lurid flashes of lightning, it seems charged with an irresistible power of destruction destined to crush everything that stands in its way.

It is unpleasant to be caught on the trail at night, as we quite frequently are, by such a storm. The horses like it no more than we do, and a firm hand must be kept on the bridle. The lightning flashes follow each other in rapid succession, lighting up, as clear as day for an instant, the dripping, storm-swept landscape, the path converted into a brook, the trees bending in the wind, then leaving rider and horse blinded in pitch darkness. The thunder crashes around us and sometimes the thunderbolts fall uncomfortably near. Soaked to the skin, we urge forward our unwilling steeds, the wind swirling around us and the rain lashing our faces, and we are fortunate if we are within reach of shelter and not forced to lie down to sleep upon the wet ground in our sodden garments. Fortunately, such an experience in a tropical climate is not likely to be so harmful as it would in a more temperate climate.

**Insects and Reptiles.** In these lands insect and reptile pests present a problem totally undreamt of in temperate regions. Snakes in great variety are numerous. On some stations it is impossible to keep them out of the houses and sometimes they are found in cupboards, on tables, climbing doorposts or among the rafters. Most of them are, probably, more frightened of us than we are of them and will make for cover at our approach.

However they are not slow to strike if startled or trodden upon. There are some varieties that show no fear and these are amongst the most poisonous. Though we know they abound, we have a remarkable freedom from fear of them. It becomes natural to take the necessary precautions, instinctively refraining from putting the hand anywhere where we cannot see. We have the assurance that, as long as our footsteps are directed in the service of the Master, He will protect us from every lurking danger.

The writer had an experience of God's protecting care in this respect at the Mission Station in Bananal. Rising just before dawn one day he went to get a drink of water from a large earthen jar in the corner of one of the rooms. Drinking water is kept in such jars to keep it cool; the mouth of the jar is usually covered with a plate on which rests a drinking cup. As he was about to lower the cup into the jar a peculiar sensation in his hand caused him to draw back. Thinking nothing of it, he essayed again to dip the cup into the vessel but the same strange sensation made him desist once more. At the same time a voice seemed to say, "Get a light." A light was brought and it revealed a poisonous snake coiled around the inside of the jar just above the water. Had he inserted his hand it would certainly have been bitten. Such experiences remind us of the nearness of His presence and His ever watchful care over us when we are engaged in His service. Would that we might ever realize His faithfulness!



**Unpleasant Company.** Centipedes several inches long are not uncommon and sometimes drop from the roof and scurry away into safety. Scorpions like to make their nests under the wood-pile. The tarantula, a hairy black or brown spider, almost as large as one's hand, is very plentiful and dangerous because its sting is poisonous. A large variety of smaller spiders never lose heart in asserting their right to fill every corner with dusty cobwebs. Some of them inhabit small holes which they make in the plaster on the walls. Large wasps build little mud homes on the rafters or in the corners of the windows. They deposit their eggs inside, then pack the remaining space with bright green caterpillars which they have stupefied with their stings and which will provide delicious fare for the baby grubs when they are hatched. Small wasps fight determinedly for the privilege of constructing their nests in or near the house.

Flies and fleas are always present, though sometimes they come in plagues. There is a small species of flea, the "pique" or "bicho do pé" which burrows under the skin, preferably under the toenails, where it lays its eggs and dies in the center of the sack which forms around them. This may have grown to the size of a pea before inconvenience is felt and its presence detected. In some places they were so plentiful that we found it necessary to examine the feet every night before retiring to rest.

Moths, silver-fish and crickets are very destructive to the clothes. Ants abound everywhere. The



large solitary black ant of the forest causes excruciating pain when it bites. An army of large red ants can carry off a sack of corn, grain by grain, in one night. The white ant is the most thorough of all destructive insects. It will attack a piece of wood from beneath and eat out the inside giving no indication of its presence but leaving nothing but a thin shell which when grasped in the hand crumbles like paper. It is necessary that boxes be placed on hardwood stands to be out of their reach.

Frogs of all kinds are abundant. Toads consider they have a right to any nook or corner around the house, and are not altogether useless on account of their great appetite for insects, except when of a morning one of them is found snugly reposing in the toe of one's shoe. Many kinds of beetles, winged cockroaches, poisonous ground ticks, mantis, bats with their babies clinging to their backs, mice, lizards and swallows also insist upon invading our humble dwelling. There is no lack of company.

These insect pests are much worse in uninhabited or recently settled regions. They cause most of the discomfort that the traveller has to endure when journeying in the interior. To go without mosquito nets would be impossible and the nets are necessary not only as a protection from mosquitoes at night but from many kinds of biting flies during the day. Many a time have we been forced to eat our meals under the nets that we might have peace from the tormenting insects. In some regions they

are so bad that one is glad to use a face net even while riding.

On most pioneer stations there is seldom any respite from their unwelcome attentions. At Ron-donopolis the hands and faces of the missionaries are continually covered with the marks of insect bites. At one Communion service which the writer attended in the little church on that station the only way to keep the biting flies away and make it possible for the audience to sit in peace during the service was to have smouldering horse dung in various parts of the room.

But of all the pests, the one most dreaded by the traveller is the tick, of which there are many varieties. They wait in clusters on the leaves for some unlucky animal (two-legged or four-legged, it matters not which) to brush by, then they make their way to all parts of the body, bury their heads under the skin and leave a small itching sore which takes several days to heal. We have known travellers who were unaccustomed to their bites to develop a slight fever after being bitten by a large number of them. In many regions it is impossible to escape them when travelling.

**Housekeeping Problems.** Economy and stern simplicity rule in the larder of the pioneer missionary. We learn that the food of the country is the best suited to the climate. On a pioneer station even butter and bread are usually unobtainable. Rice, beans, sun-dried beef, mandioca, sweet potatoes and pumpkins are sometimes the only articles of food obtainable,—and in some re-

gions even these are difficult to get. Oranges, bananas, mangos, mamonas and lemons are usually plentiful in districts where white settlers have entered.

In many mission fields servant labour is cheap and easy to obtain and the missionary is freed from many household tasks, but not so in inland South America. Wages are relatively high among the civilized peoples and those who are willing to engage in such service are often so unsatisfactory that to dispense with their help is the lesser of two evils. The Indians are usually too much accustomed to the freedom of their roving life to be willing to settle down to domestic service.

On the more remote stations, the maintenance of the food supply is a difficult problem, as has already been indicated. The corner grocery store or meat market do not exist. When several months' supplies have to be stored, there is the added problem of preserving the food from the ravages of insects. Before the end of the supply is reached, the rice, beans, flour and corn are filled with weevils and grubs which even careful sifting and washing cannot entirely remove.

The missionary may have to do his own butchering and an ox or cow will provide meat for two months. The meat is cut into strips or thin slabs, salted and dried in the sun. For a week or two it is very palatable, but it ultimately becomes more like leather than meat. In the rainy season the dried meat becomes blue with mould, and to prepare it for the pot it must first be scrubbed and

the parts where weevils and maggots nested cut away. When it is finally served on our plates, it is not uncommon to find that the eliminating process for maggots and weevils has not been complete. It will not be surprising that cutlets of alligator's tail and an occasional monkey stew may be welcome changes on the menu.

**A Life of Example.** The pioneer missionary may be pictured as he stands before his audience pointing them earnestly to the Cross, as he visits among the people, sitting amidst the squalor of their huts, or as he ministers to the sick, bathing their foul wounds. But such a picture is incomplete. As often he may be seen, sleeves rolled up and perspiration dripping from his face, as with hammer, chisel and saw he builds his house or makes his simple furniture, or as he hoes the weeds that grow apace in the plantation or wields an axe to feed his stove, or walks, goad in hand, by the side of his ox-cart, driving the oxen over the rough roads, his patience perhaps tried by a fractious beast; stopping, it may be, to replace a broken yoke or to extract a wheel from a mud hole.

Busy though the pioneer often is in work that is not usually regarded as an essential part of missionary service, he is yet enabled to find a peculiar joy in such labours. Nor is it time wasted or energy misdirected. It is the practical side of his witness, indispensable to success, for it is more eloquent than words to the simple mind of the savage. As the Indian watches the demonstration of the life of industry and service to which he is ex-



horted to attain, he sees that it is a practical possibility. Among such a primitive people, it is doubtful whether the missionary's message would be fully understood if it were not accompanied by his simple, sacrificing, strenuous life of example.

The mistake has been made by many of thinking that the work of evangelizing the Indians can be done by men and women of less training and ability than is necessary among more civilized peoples. The reverse is the case. It is a task which requires, and is worthy of, the best the Church has to give. We do not insist that a college and seminary training are essential (though they may be a decided asset) but the pioneer must be of great faith and resolute character with ability, resource and initiative. It cannot be questioned that consecrated character and training count. The spiritual quality is, of course, the determining factor: a real faith, a deep spiritual experience, a zeal for souls, and a clear call are the great essentials. The unfinished task, or we should say rather, the task that is hardly yet begun, awaits such men and women.



## VI

### TERENA CUSTOMS

*"We wait for light, but behold obscurity; for brightness, but we walk in darkness."—ISAIAH 59: 9.*

IN the Terena tribe we have a typical group of forest Indians who are fast adopting civilized ways through the influence of the surrounding civilization and the Gospel work that has been carried on so successfully amongst them. The writer has seen the gradual breaking down of many of their old institutions, to which the influence of a progressive, Christian chief contributed greatly. Fortunately there was something better to take the place of what was lost and save the tribe from disaster such as has overtaken so many when they were forced to forsake the old ways and endeavour to adapt themselves to a new order of things.

The Terenas, or, as they call themselves, the *Chane* (pronounced Shaney), were originally a Paraguayan tribe inhabiting the northwest of the Gran Chaco, being neighbours of the Lenguas, Chumacocos and Guaycurus. They migrated across the river Paraguay and north into Brazil in successive detachments towards the end of last century. During the Paraguayan war they took part in the fighting on the side of the Brazilians, acting as auxiliaries and successfully harassing the

Paraguayan lines of communication. As a reward for their services during that war, the Brazilian Government ceded a large tract of fiscal land to them. That territory, however, has been gradually encroached upon by white settlers and cattle-farmers, until now very little of it remains to the Terenas.

As they lost their hunting grounds, they were forced to find other means of subsistence and gradually settled down to the cultivation of small plantations, growing mandioca, corn, beans, sugar-cane, sweet potatoes, pumpkins and bananas. They acquired a few horses, milch cows, oxen,—and dogs. Hogs, chickens and guinea fowls helped to furnish the larder. A few of the most enterprising became the proud owners of primitive ox-carts with solid wooden wheels, such as many of the Brazilian peasants themselves use, and home-made, wooden machines for crushing sugar-cane and making mandioca meal. Most of them are extremely poor, due very often to improvidence and indolence, though in these respects they compare favourably with some of their civilized neighbours.

Their methods of agriculture, copied from the white settlers around them, are the simplest possible. A small clearing is made in the virgin forest, the trees and underbrush being felled and gathered into piles for burning. The stumps are simply left to rot out. A hoe is all that is required to turn over the rich soil and to clear away the weeds as they grow. No dressing of the soil is attempted. After a few years, when the ground begins to show

signs of exhaustion, it is abandoned and a new clearing made.

**Economic Conditions.** The little money that passes through their hands is obtained chiefly from the sale of the surplus yield of *farinha*, a meal made by a laborious process from the poisonous variety of the mandioca root, which is a popular food among both Indians and Brazilians. When the mandioca crop fails as a result of drought, caterpillars or locusts, it goes hard with the Terenas. Their only other means of obtaining money is by seeking temporary employment on some neighbouring cattle-ranch, or by selling their cows or horses.

Their dwellings now range from the wretched, primitive shelter of grass and sticks to a fairly good tile-roofed, mud-walled hut, whitewashed and provided with doors and window shutters. Not infrequently, more than one family occupy the same hut, the only privacy they have being what is afforded by their mosquito nets. The usual bed is a platform of split bamboo, laid on a rough frame three feet from the ground, supported by forks set in the earthen floor. Upon this an untanned cowhide is laid. The sleeper seldom has more than one thin covering, even in winter. If, in addition to one or more such beds, there be a table and one or two roughly made stools, the hut is considered well furnished.

The cooking is generally done on a wood-fire on the ground at the back of the hut, though two or three of the more progressive Christians have

recently built kitchens and stoves such as the Brazilian country people use. Iron pots now supplement the native clay utensils. Plates, cups, forks and spoons are coming into use, though sheath-knives, fingers and gourds are still found sufficient by many.

The advance made by the tribe in a couple of generations from naked savagery has indeed been remarkable. Several of the most intelligent of the men have picked up a sufficient knowledge of carpentry to enable them to do very creditable work; two have learned the art of fashioning rings and earrings from gold and silver; one has established himself as the village saddler; while one of the women, possessing a sewing-machine, has set up as a dressmaker. Nearly all of these, however, are converts to Christianity.

**The Old and the New.** As the tribe becomes more influenced by civilization, many of the arts practiced in the wild days fall more and more into disuse, being replaced by better methods or by superior articles easily purchased. But the rude spindle and loom are still in use, and the women have not lost their skill in fashioning their clay cooking pots and water jars.

The adoption of clothing has been followed by the passing of most of the strange old ideas of personal adornment. Fashion no longer requires, as it once did, that all the hair of the face, including even the eyebrows and eyelashes, be pulled out. A curious explanation of this custom was given. It was believed that if an Indian with a



"dirty face," *i. e.*, with hair on his face, were to approach a river or pool of water, the water spirit which dwelt there would be so insulted that it would cause the water to flood the land until the unfortunate offender was overtaken and drowned. (Many tribes explain this custom by saying that they pull the hair out so as not to look hairy like the wild animals.)

The painting of the body red, black and white has gone out of fashion and is no longer practiced, except by the witch-doctors on special occasions. The head-dresses and girdles of ostrich feathers are now worn only at the great yearly dance, which, however, through the influence of the Gospel, is no longer held in the village of Bananal. A custom that is still practiced to a considerable extent is that of chipping off the corners of the teeth to give them a saw-like appearance, which was the old tribal mark.

**Physical Characteristics.** The Terenas as a people are pleasant featured, of good physique and intelligent. Their colour is a copper-brown, but some are of a lighter shade than others. They are of average height, their bodies well-proportioned and sturdy. The head is covered with a thick mop of glossy black hair, coarse and straight. A certain variety of features is noticeable, but usually the face is inclined to be round, the cheek bones high, the forehead broad, the eyes jet black and almond shaped, the nose straight and slightly flattened, the chin short and round, the upper lip thick and the corners of the mouth inclined down-



wards. Occasionally a long face, aquiline nose and thin lips are seen.

Quiet-mannered, soft-spoken even in the bitterest quarrel, reserved and dignified, they appear to be emotionless, dour and sluggish; yet they are exceptionally keen of sight and hearing, observant of the minutest detail of their surroundings, and in the chase or in war may be roused in a moment to a panther-like swiftness and agility. They are indeed children of the forest, their characteristics just such as might be expected in a people whose forefathers for many centuries back roamed the silent woods, depending for their food upon their skill in stalking the fleet-footed deer and the treacherous panther and ever wary of the human foe who might be lurking near.

Suspicious and crafty, the Indian is not usually treacherous. A wrong or an insult is bitterly resented and the memory of it cherished long, yet kindness and just dealing easily win him, and, his confidence and friendship once secured, he is capable of the noblest fidelity.

The Terena women are modest and shy, never raising the voice, yet bearing themselves with a dignity that is enhanced by the erect carriage resulting from their custom of carrying their burdens upon their heads. The women of the Bororo tribe are an exception in this respect, for they are bold and loud-spoken and two of them may often be seen at their doors hurling insults at each other and miscalling each other's husbands, much to the amusement of the men.

**Government of a Tribe.** The Terena tribal government was simple and loose. The units were the family and the village. Each village had a head man or chief who was chosen for his courage in war. There was no paramount chief of the tribe. In war the chief who had taken the initiative was regarded as commander-in-chief. The village chief had control of all local affairs, enforcing the few simple laws and customs which regulated the lives of the people. He could not, however, act solely upon his own initiative. It was necessary for him to have the consent of the village council which was composed of all those of warrior rank in the community. If, as sometimes happened, there was a division of opinion in the council, the minority might, if it were extremely dissatisfied, leave the village and join some other group, or if it were strong enough, it might choose a chief of its own and form a new village. Such an occurrence is, at the present day, frequent among the Bororos and other tribes.

The chief was in no sense a despot. He was respected and obeyed as chief officer of the council, and in that capacity he was expected to judge in all disputes between individuals, but his powers were limited and his influence was in proportion to his personal renown, force of character and ability as a leader. The men of a community generally acted together in hunting and fishing under the leadership of the local chief, the spoils of the chase being divided among those who took part or who had a sufficient reason for remaining behind.

The tribe as a whole only united for defense, or, by common consent, to make war.

Their communistic ideas worked well enough in the old manner of life, but they have proved quite a drawback under more settled and complex conditions. While the possessions of all were limited to a few implements and ornaments there was no great difficulty in regarding everything as more or less common property, but when it came to be, under the more civilized order, that life depended upon individual effort and initiative, the whole situation changed. If a man worked hard on his plantation and secured a goodly crop of mandioca, corn and beans, sufficient to provide for himself and his family, it was decidedly discouraging to have his lazy and improvident relatives and neighbours expect that he should share his supply with them. One Indian started a butcher shop, but he found he had so many relatives that he was forced to shut down the business immediately. Such conditions put an effective brake upon personal enterprise. In spite of all difficulties, however, the people are slowly adjusting themselves to their new circumstances and communism is giving way to individualism. If the individualism be governed by the spirit of Christ and the law of love which He taught, the change will not be harmful.

**Tribal Divisions.** Among the Terenas three distinct ranks were recognized; the *Naati* (chiefs), *Shunachati* (warriors), and the *Machatichane* (camp-followers). A warrior could be raised by election to the rank of chief, but a camp-follower

could only attain to the rank of warrior by being successful in killing many in war. The camp-followers were at the orders of the warriors. Intermarriage among these ranks was not permitted and this rule was safeguarded by severe penalties, which in some cases meant death. It is this custom which, in the first contacts with civilization, saved the tribe to a great extent from acquiring venereal diseases from the whites, and kept its blood relatively pure.

The whole tribe was further divided into two sections in a most unusual manner. One party was known as the *Supriquionó* (good) and the other was the *Shumonó* (bad). How the two divisions originated we have not been able to discover, though we surmise that they are related in some way to the good and bad brothers of their mythology. Each of these parties contains the three ranks above mentioned. Intermarriage between the two parties was also forbidden. As the present chief of Bananal village pointed out, he, who is of "bad" descent, could not, under the old law, have married his wife, whose parents were "good." These distinctions have all broken down during the last generation and are now completely disregarded. Except for the rule barring intermarriage, the two sections, the "good" and the "bad," lived together as one, the division only becoming apparent during the great yearly war-dance known as the *Cohishótiqipahú*, or "Dance of the Ostrich Feather Dress."

**Marriage Customs.** Apart from the regulations



regarding intermarriage, custom seems to have been the only law governing marriage. In contrast to the custom among the Nhambiquaras and some other tribes, where a man can have as many wives as he is able to support, the Terenas seldom practiced polygamy, though it was not forbidden. Parents betrothed their children while they were infants, the mothers taking the leading part in the negotiations. As many of the Indians now realize, this custom, which is not yet wholly discontinued, often resulted in the pair being unhappily matched, and the outcome was that frequently a man and wife would separate and seek new partners. Now the rising generation is not always willing to accept the partner previously chosen and trouble sometimes arises when conservative old women feel it their duty to try to force the young folk to comply with the old custom. The women were generally very well treated by their husbands and, in their own way, exercised a considerable influence in the community. They were the guardians of custom, being naturally more conservative than the men. Morally the tribe was on a decidedly higher level than the Roman Catholic populations of the land, but a marked deterioration in morals has accompanied the introduction of more civilized ways.

The ceremonies connected with marriage were simple. During the night before the event, separate feasts were held in the huts of the young man's and the bride's parents. Then, in the early morning, the young man chooses a friend to ac-



company him as a sort of "best man," and, with the rest of the guests who took part in the feast at his hut following, he proceeds to the bride's hut. A hammock, which the bride has made for the occasion and which is her gift to the groom as a "rest hammock" in which he may recline during the day, is slung between two poles in the hut. The groom seats himself in the center of the hammock and his best man sits down by his side. The bride then comes forward and takes her seat on the other side of the groom. The women who are present chant songs in celebration of the event and the pair are considered married. They may settle down in the hut of her parents or go to one of their own.

**Death and Despair.** There is something indescribably sad about the death of an Indian. It is then that there is revealed, as under no other circumstances, the fear, the hopelessness and helplessness, of the soul that is without God. Among the Terenas, relatives and friends crowd into the little hut, chanting, wailing and beating their breasts. When it is seen that the life has fled, there rises a cry of anguish and despair, a shrill screaming that, once heard, can never be forgotten for it chills the heart as it reveals the depths of despair of a hopeless soul.

The body is buried in a little graveyard with no other ceremony than the chanting of old women and witch-doctors. The men give little outward sign of their feelings but the women exercise no restraint, screaming and lacerating their bodies.

Then the wife and mother go into mourning for a month. Their hair has been cut short, their breasts lacerated with sharp pieces of wood and earth rubbed over their bodies. The poor creatures retire into a corner of the hut where they sit naked, never raising their eyes from the ground, refusing to speak and wailing at sunrise, midday, sunset and midnight.

On the return from the funeral, the family of the deceased gathers together and each person takes a new name. Many of the Christian Indians had changed their names several times before their conversion from heathenism. The reason they give for the custom is that, if they continued to be called by the names which were used by their dead friend, they would be continually reminded of him and their sorrow would be greater. It is also for this reason, they say, that they burn the hut in which the dead had lived and destroy all his possessions, except a piece of pottery or an axe head which is placed on the grave. In many tribes this is not the only reason for these customs. The spirit of the dead is often feared and the hut of the departed one is destroyed that he may not return to haunt it. Some tribes such as the Bororos perform a ceremony which is supposed to frighten the spirit of the dead person away from the village and insure that it does not return.

It is still a common sight among the Terenas, in the early morning, to see a number of women making their way to the graveyard, walking in single file along the winding footpath. Their hair



### NEW CREATURES IN CHRIST

*Left:* Christian Chief, Marcolino of the Tenuas, and His Wife Georgina, Each a Preacher of the Gospel. *Right:* Maria and Her Baby (see page 55).



hangs loose and dishevelled as a sign of mourning. When they reach the graveyard they gather handfuls of grass and begin to sweep the graves. As they bend over the graves, they speak to the dead, passing from one grave to another, talking to friends who have gone, but there is no response. Soon they begin to sob and intone their weird chants, then, finally abandoning themselves to their grief, they leap shrieking into the air to dash their bodies down upon the hopeless graves. The graveyard is near the Mission Houses and it used to be that, frequently, sometimes many mornings in succession, we would hear the screaming of the mourners. Lately it has become much less frequent. The "Balm of Gilead" is healing the wound and the heartache has gone out of many lives to give place to that peace which possesses the soul in which God's own spirit cries, "Abba, Father!"

It is now nine years since the first death of a Christian Indian occurred among the Terenas. When Ulalia, a young woman of about twenty years of age, lay dying on the earthen floor of a primitive hut in Bananal, she sent for Honorio the deacon to pray with her. "I know God is calling me," she said, "and I am not afraid because I'm going to be with Jesus." Most of the people in the hut were Christians and there was no screaming or wailing. In place of despair there was glorious hope. Just before the body was taken to the graveyard, some women knelt down by the head, as was the custom, to say farewell to



the departed one, but, instead of enacting the usual scene of grief, they said to her, "We shall be going too some day and we shall meet you there." At the grave side a large number of Christians gathered and sang the hymns of hope and faith reverently but with an energy that was eloquent of the comfort they brought. Death had lost its sting.

As the tribe was a warlike one, the young men found the highest expression of their manhood in war and sought to harden themselves for it by racing, wrestling, boxing and by abstaining for long periods—five or six days—from food and water. Fasting for such a purpose, or at puberty, or before marriage, or by a sick person to drive out the evil spirit, supposed to have entered the body, is very common amongst Indian tribes.

**The Yearly Festival.** Of the tribal dances and ceremonies, the most important and most interesting are those connected with the great yearly festival which lasts for more than a week and is held when the Pleiades appears in a certain position in the North. Three "moons" before the day appointed for the festival, the medicine-men begin their weird preparations for the event. Each evening, immediately after sunset, they take their stand in front of their huts and intone chants to the accompaniment of the jangle of their gourd rattles. Sometimes the words of the chant have no meaning; at other times they describe the excursions of the medicine-man's spirit into the spirit realm or towards the great sea.

Two days before the public ceremonies begin, the witch-doctors gather in secret conclave at dead of night at a selected spot outside the village. A fire is kindled in the midst of the assembly, and, after due deliberation and much chanting and rattling of gourds and working of magic, one of the oldest and most renowned of their number is chosen as Master of Ceremonies. He then rises and takes his stand in the center of the company, holding a long staff in his hand, while the details of the festival are being arranged. Finally, as signs of dawn are beginning to appear in the sky, he turns towards the village and cries: "Cosacosa, awake, O Chief of the Terenas!" which is the signal for the whole village to begin to prepare for the festival. The medicine-men then adjourn to their respective huts.

During the day a little booth made of sticks and palm leaves is erected before the door of each witch-doctor's hut. A painted, forked stick, on which his gourd rattle and ostrich plume are hung, is set in the ground in the center of the booth. On the following morning the witch-doctors, naked except for a piece of red cloth around the loins, a head-dress of macaw feathers on the head, and the body besmeared in a most fearsome manner with charcoal, or red, white, or blue pigments, enter their booths and chant continuously, taking no food, for a day and a night.

The last act of the "religious" part of the ceremonies is the "collection." The old witch-doctor who has been chosen leader, paints his body black

and white in the approved fashion, covers his face with a net bag such as the men formerly used for carrying their pipe, tobacco, tinder, paint, etc., takes a bunch of ostrich feathers in one hand and a deer's horn in the other and is led round the village. Taken first to the house of the chief, he begins his chant and plays the part of an evil spirit, advancing towards the door, then retreating, gradually approaching nearer, gesticulating energetically, until finally he rushes forward and with a vicious grunt strikes the door with the point of the horn. The Chief then comes out and makes a substantial offering to the witch-doctors, thus appeasing the evil spirit. This performance is repeated before every hut in the village and a similar offering received.

The people are now free to engage in feasting and games, which they do with a hearty zest. The first event is a great boxing tournament. The Chief divides the men into two parties. A champion from each side engage first, fighting with bare fists until one falls. The victor is then faced by another of the beaten side, the match proceeding in this way until all the men of one side have been knocked out, the victory lying with the other.

**Dance of the Ostrich Feather Dress.** The climax of the whole celebration is the *Cohishóti-quípahú* the "Dance of the Ostrich Feather Dress." It is a war dance and is known by the whites in the neighbourhood as the *Bate-pau*, or "stick-striking" dance. For several days great preparations have been going forward; ostrich

feather head-dresses and girdles, decorated poles and bows and arrows must be got ready and the steps have to be practiced. The dance takes place towards the close of the festival week. Since the medicine-men opened the proceedings, the tribe has been divided into the two parties, the *Supri-quionó* (good) and the *Shumonó* (bad). The "bad" have been on the rampage, evidently possessed of a passion to break or destroy everything they see; the "good" meanwhile have been patiently enduring. But finally the "good" not being able to endure it any longer, declare war on the "bad." At daybreak next morning both parties, in separate huts, make what are supposed to be secret preparations for a surprise attack upon the foe, donning their war-dresses of paint and feathers, tying bows and arrows on their backs and grasping long, painted poles in their hands.

At a given signal the two armies fall into line fully bedecked and prepared for war and sally forth from behind their huts, dancing in single file behind their drummers and advancing slowly towards each other with a rhythmic movement. The actions of the two lines of dancing warriors as they approach each other are suggestive of the stalking of an enemy. The dancers, with eyes fixed on the ground, as if seeking a trail, bend low first to one side then to the other, striking the butts of their staves on the ground in unison. As the two lines meet they turn and advance side by side down the street, continuing their stalking movements as before. Suddenly one side raises its

sticks and strikes at the heads of the others, who at the same moment have raised their sticks, grasped in both hands, above their heads to receive the blow. The stalking actions are resumed again for a few steps, then the attack is returned by the other side; and so the dance proceeds. Every hut is visited and a few evolutions performed in front of each. The dance continues, with intervals for rest and drinking, during the whole day. After the dance, the "bad" are considered to be vanquished and they settle down to behave themselves for another year.

On the closing evening of the festival the men and women gather in the center of the village and the women match their swiftness against that of the men. If a woman succeeds in tying a thread around a man's wrist he is bound to give her whatever she may ask.



## VII

### INDIAN SUPERSTITIONS AND WITCH-DOCTORS

*"They have made them crooked paths: whosoever goeth therein shall not know peace."*—ISAIAH 59:8.

THE religion of the Terenas is the lowest form of nature worship. A word for God, "*Itucoövití*," literally "one who made us," existed in their language, but they appeared to know nothing about Him except that He was a good spirit who, as the word implies, made all things in the beginning. But the invariable answer to any further question regarding Him is "we don't know." Any beliefs which they may formerly have had regarding the Creator, have been lost entirely. The word, however, was found suitable for expressing the idea of the Christian God. From it the composite, *Sheësha-itucoövití* "Son of God" was easily formed.

Unlike many tribes, they had no definite conception of a heaven, or "happy hunting ground," to which their spirits would go at death. They believed that the spirit left the body at death, but whether it became a good or bad spirit, where it went to, or whether it was happy or not, they did not know. Their ideas about the matter were extremely vague. They feared the spirits of the dead, believing that they could do them harm and

for that reason they would carefully avoid burying places at night. The life beyond the grave was a dark, impenetrable mystery full of vague fears. It was like looking out into the blackness of the night and being able to distinguish no landmark that was recognizable, but only the shadowy forms of unknown terrors which chilled the heart with an icy fear. They seemed to have no thought of punishment or reward after death.

All nature was peopled with spirits, good and bad. It was believed that evil spirits dwelt in animals, trees, rivers, the wind, storms and clouds. These spirits were ever ready to work mischief against human beings if the right conditions were afforded. The spirits of certain animals and birds were thought by some tribes to be friendly. It is for this reason that some animals are held to be sacred in a number of tribes. The Bororos, for instance, believe that the great spirit that makes them dwells in the deer.

The Indians seem to consider the principle of good as basic but inactive, while the principle of evil is intrusive and active, or, as they might express it, good is the plant while evil is the slug that eats holes in the leaves. The plant continues to grow, new leaves appear, and the slug ceases not its work of destruction. The good spirits, though they themselves seem to be beyond the reach of the evil spirits, appear to be unable to do anything to curb their activity. Thus they have interpreted the natural phenomena around them, vaguely discerning a beneficent principle in

nature but seeing that evil was apparently ever triumphant. Fallen man amidst a fallen world, and without a revelation of God, has in all ages come to the same sad conclusion. "The world by wisdom knew not God."

**Good and Bad Spirits.** There is no doubt in the Indian mind as to the reality and power of these demon neighbours, and the resulting fear, the ever-present haunting dread that throws its baleful shadow over the lives of these primitive people can hardly be appreciated by us. It dominates their lives, enslaving their minds and even their bodies, controlling their thoughts and actions from birth to the grave.

With such beliefs the Indian might have been entirely fatalistic in his outlook, but he is saved from that by his faith in the power of the medicine-man to control the activity of the spirit world. The medicine-man gets his power, not from the good spirits, but through establishing relations with the evil spirits themselves. Each witch-doctor has a particular familiar spirit with which he is in league and through whom he obtains his special power and knowledge.

Many tribes believe in the existence of a being who was the originator of all things, but, as a rule, no worship of any kind or petition is addressed to him or to any Good Spirit. Most of their religious ceremonies are for the purpose of appeasing, frightening, pleasing, or otherwise controlling the evil spirits. The more advanced Indian nations had an organized priesthood with idol

worship and a highly developed ritual in which, in some cases, human sacrifice had an important place. The forest Indians, however, have no idea of sacrifice. They make use of incantations, amulets, charms, and dances. Very few tribes have images of any kind. Belief in the immortality of the soul is universal, and some even consider the body also as immortal. Among certain tribes there is a definite belief in a heaven where people after death dwell happily and well-provided with what are considered the good things of life. In most cases no distinction is made between the good and the bad, both going to the same place and being equally happy. A few tribes, however, do make a difference between them, in some cases placing the bad in a lower heaven where the land is barren, game scarce and food difficult to obtain.

The Indians have definite standards of good and evil, though their conception of what is good and what is evil is not based upon Christian ideals but upon their own crude ethics. Cowardice is regarded practically as a sin, while the torturing and slaying of the enemies of the tribe is a virtue. There is, however, a conscience that tells a man that such things as murder, adultery, false witness, and theft are wrong.

Among the Bororos the harpy-eagle represents the principle of evil while the good spirit, their "great father," dwells in the deer. The Parecís fear especially the thunder spirit who, they say, sends the lightning to destroy. In the region in



which they live severe storms are common and not infrequently Indians are killed by lightning. Therefore they engage in dances that are supposed to appease the thunder spirit and protect them from the lightning. It is not in the dance, however, but in the instruments used in it that the power is supposed to lie. These are large flutes made of bamboo, and gourd rattles. They are kept hidden in a little grass hut on the edge of the village and when they are taken out the women must remain in their huts with doors carefully closed, for it is believed that if these instruments are seen by any woman she will die. They say that the chief spirit lives in the great waterfall on the river Papagaio at the village called Utiarity (medicine-man). This spirit also must be courted or he may do them harm.

**A Creation Story.** Each tribe regards itself as a distinct and superior people with an origin different from that of any other. Some consider themselves to have sprung from the earth, their ancestors being rocks, others claim to be descendants of a spirit, while many believe that their originator was a python, tiger, deer or other animal.

The Terena story of the origin of their tribe is a typical one. They say there were two good spirits, brothers, who lived and hunted in a great forest. Every evening it was their custom to set a snare in a certain tree to catch birds and each morning they would find a sufficient number of birds entrapped to provide them with food for the day. One morning they were much surprised to



find the snare empty, but concluded that the birds must have been absent from the district that morning. However, on the second morning the snare was again empty and so it continued for several mornings in succession.

Then the brothers were certain that somebody was stealing the birds, so one of them began to search the ground around the tree for tracks of the robber. As he did so he noticed drops of blood leading to a large tuft of grass. Seizing the tuft, he tore it out of the ground disclosing a great hole leading far down into the earth. Then out of this hole the Terenas came, blinded by the sunlight and shivering with cold.

The brothers treated the Terenas kindly and wanted to kindle a fire to warm them, but fire could be obtained only from two evil spirit-brothers who lived a great distance away, so the good brothers sent a hare to beg the evil brothers for a brand from their fire. The hare sped away as swift as the wind, and, at length, appeared before the keepers of the fire. They were sitting on the ground facing each other with the fire between them and their legs stretched out on either side of it to guard it.

The hare repeated the request of the good brothers, but the evil brothers absolutely refused to give fire to anybody. The hare, being a cunning animal, was not discouraged, but thought out a plan by which he could outwit the selfish guardians of the fire. Suddenly, he leaped over the legs of the brothers, seized a brand from the center of the

fire, at the same time scattering the fire and throwing the burning embers into the faces of the brothers so that they fell backwards, and then he fled for his life with the firebrand.

The evil brothers pursued him and as they were able to run much swifter than any hare he was soon forced to take refuge in a hollow tree trunk. They tried to kill him by prodding a stick into the hole, but the hare put a little blood on the end of the stick, and the brothers, thinking that he was dead, returned to their fire, while the hare, very much alive, carried the firebrand safely to the good brothers who soon made a great fire and warmed the Terenas.

A modernized version of the story says that all the peoples of the earth came out of the hole discovered by the good spirits, who, after the fire had been obtained, scattered various implements, such as wooden root-diggers, hoes and knives upon the ground and told the people to choose what they wanted. The Terenas picked up the wooden root-digger, the Spaniards preferred the hoe, and other nations chose according to their tastes. Thus were the different nations of the earth formed.

As the Terenas advance towards civilization much of their lore is being lost and what remains is being changed under the influence of new ideas and associations. The authentic stories and myths of the past can be obtained now only from the old people.

**Strange Superstitions.** Everything that is not understood is attributed to a supernatural cause,

and upon that basis even things that were unknown to the tribe before they came into contact with civilization are accounted for. Cattle were formerly unknown to them and it is not many years since they first began to own a few cows, oxen and horses, yet the following story is given of the origin of the "foot and mouth" disease, which frequently causes great loss among the cattle: One day, long ago, when the Terenas possessed great herds of cattle, an Indian was driving a few cows along a dusty road. An old witch-doctor sitting unobserved by the roadside was annoyed by the dust which was raised by the animals as they passed, and, though he said nothing about it to anybody, he silently cursed the animals with the result that they all became sick with the "foot and mouth" disease and died. Since then, the disease has always returned to attack the cattle.

**The Witch-Doctor's Training.** The complete stock-in-trade of the Indian medicine-man, or sorcerer, is a genuine belief in evil spirits, a casual acquaintance with a few simple herbal remedies, a scientific knowledge of the effects of various poisons and a profound understanding of Indian human nature. The Terena medicine-man might easily have been the prototype of our modern spiritist medium, for the Indian sorcerer also does all sorts of tricks with spirits, raises folk from the dead and cures the sick by magic, only, his power is less limited, or he has a freer hand, for he also claims to be able, through the spirits, to quietly dispose of anybody who may incur his disfavour.

The Terena witch-doctors, both men and women, are required to go through a long process of training, which often begins when they are children. They study herbal remedies and poisons and learn to treat the sick. They become familiar with the magical chants and formulas, and practice fasting and dancing for long periods that they may be able to pass the endurance tests. During the last year of training they must abstain from fresh meat, fat, salt, mandioca and fruit. On a certain day the instructor produces from his mouth a frog, small snake, or tarantula and gives it to his pupil to eat. Finally they are initiated into the mystery of raising the spirits of the dead, and it is on the night that the young aspirant first succeeds in calling up the spirit of some dead witch-doctor that he or she finally qualifies as a fully accredited practitioner.

One Indian, the son of witch-doctors, told us how he failed in this final test. For several nights in succession he had danced from sunset to sunrise and at last he had come to the great night when he would see and take counsel with a spirit. It was a very dark night and he had been dancing and chanting with his gourd and ostrich plume for several hours when he heard a rustling sound as of something unearthly approaching; but he did not wait to see the spirit, for his nerves gave way and with a yell he fled into the forest. So he failed to become a witch-doctor.

The witch-doctors are capable of great endurance. We have known them to go through a whole



night of violent exercise, dancing and contorting their bodies, without intermission, and on the following day show no visible signs of fatigue. They often abstain from certain dishes, and sometimes they eat special foods that are considered to have the power to make them wise. One day, when riding in the forest in the Paraguayan Chaco, in company with an Indian, we came upon a lone witch-doctor sitting by a fire. He had several snakes spitted on sticks and was roasting them before the fire. Though he admitted that he intended to eat them, he would not discuss his reasons for doing so; but our Indian companion said the eating of the snakes would make him a more powerful witch-doctor.

**The Witch-Doctor's Cunning.** As illustrative of the clever way in which the witch-doctors can apply their knowledge of human nature, the following story, told by a young Terena Indian, is interesting. A man missed a certain article which he valued and, concluding it had been stolen, he appealed to a witch-doctor to find the thief. The witch-doctor gathered all the children of the village together and placed them in a row facing him, ordering them to be silent. Turning his back on them, he gazed long into a little looking-glass which he held in his hand; then he looked up at the sun. After he had done this, he started to walk to and fro, alternately studying the glass and the sun. This he continued to do for about an hour, then, turning suddenly to the children, he passed down the line scrutinizing the face of each



one. He declared that the culprit was not among them, and, calling the young men together, he repeated the whole process with them. This time he was successful, for after his keen eyes had searched their faces, he pointed out the thief and the stolen article was restored. The young man who told the story firmly believed that the spirits had revealed the thief to the witch-doctor, and would not admit that a guilty face had played any part in the discovery.

**The Witch-Doctor as Healer.** All the ills to which the Indian is subject are attributed directly to the presence of evil spirits. A sick person often believes that the spirit of a snake, tiger, frog or some such animal or reptile has entered his body. The medicine-man is summoned to exorcise the invading spirit, and he comes with gourd-rattle, ostrich plume and a mysterious collection of small pieces of bone, seeds and claws, the magical powers of which he is willing to employ for a handsome fee.

These medicine-men know and employ a few elementary, useful principles of medical science. They prepare herbal concoctions with which they are able to purge, to reduce the temperature and to induce perspiration. They suck the forehead, abdomen, or any region where pain is felt, with such force that blood is drawn through the skin, leaving a black bruise mark that will remain for days. This treatment has the same effect as cupping. They also prescribe fasting. They are past-masters in the use of suggestion. But, al-

though they possess this knowledge, it is unfortunately so mixed with superstition and ignorance that they often do more harm than good. Of course, they do not understand the action their treatment has upon the sickness, except that, in some cases, it has the desired effect.

An indispensable part of any treatment is noise. The medicine-man, sometimes assisted by some of his brethren and by the old women, rattles his gourd, dances, chants and yells day and night, creating such a pandemonium that the spirit would be bold indeed that was not scared. The wonder is that sometimes the patient survives.

For certain stubborn spirits, starvation is prescribed. We have seen a woman starve herself to death, believing that if she took food she would nourish the evil spirit that had taken possession of her. Sometimes the spirit is extracted in a tangible form. After sucking vigorously at the affected part, the witch-doctor will suddenly become convulsed as if in great pain, and the audience is aware that he is engaged in a desperate conflict with the intruding spirit. Then he will triumphantly take from his mouth a piece of bone, a frog, or a small snake, which he claims is the evil spirit he has sucked out of the patient's body. Such a cure is, of course, popular and very convincing to both patient and onlooker.

In difficult and doubtful cases, the medicine-man is able to free himself from all responsibility by saying that sufficient wisdom is not to be found in the land of the living and that he must consult

the spirit of a dead witch-doctor. If the advice of the wise dead fails, it surely would not be reasonable to blame the living.

**Witch-Doctors and Their Spirits.** The witch-doctors are, of course, not immune from sickness, but when they become ill there is usually supposed to be something remarkable about their cases. A Terena witch-doctor, who is still living and who not long ago professed conversion, once fell suddenly ill. A friendly witch-doctor went to treat him and reported that the soul of the sick witch-doctor had been lost. While the soul had been making one of its usual excursions into the realm of spirits, the spirit of a near-by brook had captured it and carried it off to some unknown place of concealment. The friendly witch-doctor set about finding the lost soul and finally succeeded in rescuing it from the brook spirit and the sick witch-doctor recovered with no loss of prestige.

An accurate knowledge of the effect of various poisons forms an important part of the medicine-man's equipment. He does not scruple to use this knowledge to carry out his purposes or the desires of those who pay him sufficiently well for his services. Not long ago a young Indian of Bananal who had the misfortune to make an enemy of one of the medicine-men took suddenly ill and died just after his return from a visit to a neighbouring village. He said that on his way home he had reached the stream that flows between the two villages just as the sun was setting and the shadows were fast deepening among the trees that line the

banks. When he was about to step into the water to ford the stream, the spirit of the unfriendly witch-doctor appeared before him with outstretched hand, in which he held a gourd cup containing a dark liquid. The spirit commanded him to take the cup and drink, and the terrified youth obeyed. Then the spirit disappeared among the trees and the young Indian went home and died within an hour. Sometimes the relatives of one thus killed retaliate and the witch-doctor may be found dead upon some lonely path.

**The Witch-Doctor as a Magician.** Many of the Indians testify to the skill of the witch-doctors as conjurors, and credit them with powers not inferior to those of the fakirs of India. The witch-doctor can extract any small object such as pieces of bone, frogs, lizards, or snakes from any part of the body. Taking a piece of bamboo they will cast it on the ground and in its place will be a snake. They will bend down so that one arm lies upon the ground, then rise up leaving the arm on the ground; bend down a second time and rise with the arm in its place. One of those who described the latter incident, a Christian of exceptional intelligence who has lost all faith in the witch-doctors, said, "I can hardly believe that I saw it for it seems impossible to me now, but whether it actually happened, or the witch-doctor made me think I saw what I really did not see, I cannot say, but I do know that my eyes beheld it." The Indians say that the witch-doctor will only do such things on a very special occasion, as when the power of one



of them has been challenged by the others and he wishes to prove his ability.

As has already been indicated, some of the witch-doctors are expert snake charmers. One who had been challenged by other witch-doctors to demonstrate his power, showed himself to be no mean snake-charmer. He called his doubting brethren, and the chief men of the village, to witness the exhibition, which took place in his hut. After dancing in a circle around the room for a while, he laid his gourd rattle in the center of the floor, covering it with his bundle of ostrich feathers. Then he divided the time between dancing and sitting by the gourd and feathers, chanting. When at least an hour had been spent in this way, a whistling sound was heard proceeding from the gourd and feathers, and soon an angry rattlesnake appeared from under them, with darting tongue. The witch-doctor put his hand to the ground and the snake crawled up his arm until it hung around his neck. Standing thus, he boasted of his power until the other witch-doctors, who were less skillful than he, became enraged. He then lowered his hand to the ground again and the snake descended and disappeared under the feathers. The witch-doctor raised himself, struck his forehead with his hand and a small white snake dropped to the ground from under his chin. Finally, lifting the gourd-rattle and feathers, he displayed them to show that there was no snake in them.

When the missionaries appeared among the Terenas, the medicine-men recognized them as



their natural enemies and were bitterly opposed to them. Instinctively they knew that the success of the missionary would sound the death-knell of all their power and claims. One veteran witch-doctor, a very old man, who had been born in the Chaco before the last of the tribe migrated into Brazilian territory, tried to kill the missionaries with his magic. He applied himself to his incantations and dancing for some time, but ultimately gave up the attempt, admitting frankly that he was unable to do any harm to the newcomers. He told the people that several times he had got his spirit as far as the fence around the Mission Houses, but that there it was resisted by a stronger power which prevented it from going any farther. Since then, that witch-doctor and several others have professed conversion and abandoned their black arts for a living faith in Christ.

## VIII

### HOW A TRIBE WAS WON

*"And were this world, all devils o'er,  
And watching to devour us,  
We lay it not to heart so sore,  
Not they can overpower us.  
And let the Prince of Ill  
Look grim as e'er he will,  
He harms us not a whit,  
A word shall quickly slay him."*

—LUTHER, *Carlyle's translation.*

SINCE the opening of the mission station among the Terenas, the Inland South America Missionary Union has greatly extended its work among the Indians, but the arrival of the little band of missionaries at Bananal, the chief village of that tribe, was an important event in the history of Brazilian missions. Attempts had been made by several societies to establish work among the Indians of that country, but all had ended in disaster, and a number of devoted missionaries lost their lives. The mission to the Terenas was destined to be the first successful Protestant Mission to the Brazilian Indians. Little wonder, then, that every step of the way was bitterly contested by the powers of darkness and won only by steadfast faith. Obstacle after obstacle was thrown in the way and there were times when it seemed that the battle was lost. The story of the progress of the

work since its inception in 1913 is the story of God's faithfulness to those who ventured forth in simple faith and of His power to overrule and bring to naught the most cunning devices of the Enemy.

A preliminary journey of investigation had been carried out a year previous to the opening of the work, and the Indians had then expressed a great desire to have teachers sent to them, so the missionaries looked forward confidently to a hearty welcome. They reached the little railway station of Taunay on the border of the Indian reserve after an arduous journey of more than a thousand miles from Paraguay, and sent a message to the Indian Chief advising him of their arrival and requesting assistance in conveying their baggage to the village. The Chief, Pedro, at once expressed his willingness to receive them, but unexpected opposition arose among a powerful faction in the village and the Chief was forced to withdraw the permission he had given.

**Unlooked-for Difficulties.** The Chief was a man of weak character, a drunkard, who cared little for the interests of the tribe. His conduct had alienated the support of the progressive element in the tribe and the opposition was led by Marcolino, a man of strong character and an able leader. Marcolino was jealous for the best interests of his people and had little confidence in the white man. When the missionaries arrived, he distrusted them as he would any other white men, believing that their aim could be only to exploit his people. Some Brazilian drink-sellers, who very naturally were

antagonistic to the influence of the Gospel, seized the opportunity to spread the report that the missionaries intended ultimately to obtain possession of the Indians' land.

Such a situation was unexpected and discouraging. The two missionary families had to camp where they were, beside the railway line, improvising tents with sheets and blankets. Their situation was not a pleasant one, for at that time the little railway station was nothing but a frontier post of civilization, an old railway wagon serving as station house. It was a rendezvous for bandits and drink-sellers and the nights were often disturbed by drunken rioting and shooting. Taunay has changed greatly since then and is now a growing village. All the original bandit settlers have died violent deaths, but when the missionaries first arrived, it was frankly admitted that the only law was the .44 revolver.

The missionaries appealed to the Government for official permission to enter Bananal village, and this the Society for the Protection of the Indians graciously granted. This was such a distinct answer to prayer that the missionaries took fresh courage, realizing that God was definitely working on their behalf and testing their faith merely that He might the more clearly show His faithfulness and power. Marcolino could not continue his opposition to their entrance into the village in face of the permission granted by the Government, but he was far from being reconciled to the presence of the strangers.

It was two weeks after their arrival before they were finally permitted to enter the village. Two single-room Indian huts were placed at their disposal. During the time they were camped near the railway God's care over them had been evidenced by the fact that there had been very little rain, thus saving them much discomfort and the loss of some of their goods; but hardly had they established themselves in the village when a storm broke that was so severe that it wrecked part of one of the huts they were occupying.

**A Persistent Enemy.** Marcolino now adopted a policy of passive resistance, advising the Indians to refuse to aid the missionaries in obtaining the necessary building material for the construction of the Mission Houses, and such was his influence that even the Chief's party obeyed him, and no further progress could be made. Meanwhile, the missionaries opened a day-school for the children, and finding the adults equally anxious to learn to read and write, they started night classes for the men. A little later, preaching services were started. The spare time was occupied with personal witnessing and the making of a few indispensable articles of furniture. An epidemic of smallpox broke out in the village and gave an opportunity of rendering medical aid to the suffering. The Indians did not understand the danger of infection and the sick moved freely among those who were well, entering the missionaries' huts to sit and talk with them, making them anxious on account of their children. But God protected His servants



and not one of them took the dreaded sickness, which entered every hut in the village except the two occupied by the missionaries.

Marcolino's opposition continued unabated and so effective that the missionaries found themselves at a standstill. But God's resources are not limited and He sent help from a most unexpected quarter. A Brazilian cattle farmer, a Roman Catholic, whose great estate bordered on the Indian reserve, heard of the difficulties the missionaries were encountering and presented them with the title-deeds of two acres of land adjoining the Indian territory, two miles from the village of Bananal and half a mile from the village of Ipegue. The possession of this land made the missionaries independent of both Indians and Government and enabled them to proceed with the building of the Mission Houses.

Just when all the obstacles on the field had been removed and the building of the Mission Station was finally commenced, another difficulty arose. The support from the homeland appeared to fail. The funds came in so slowly that the completion of the Mission Houses was delayed many months. As the missionaries laboured day after day beyond their strength under a fierce tropical sun, it seemed that they were forgotten. They felt like a diver who had gone down into the depths of the sea and who found that his friends up above were forgetting to pump the vital air down to him. There were times when these lonely workers were tempted to be discouraged, yet God graciously sus-

tained them, teaching them the great lesson that even under such circumstances, when all that we would most naturally depend upon fails, His resources are unlimited. He gave them the vision of faith which enabled them to press forward under all circumstances with a full assurance of final victory.

**Home Helpers.** Yet, though there may have been for a time a lack of support on the part of some in the homeland, the complete story of the work among the Terena Indians cannot be told without reference to those whose faithfulness in prayer and gift made it possible. There were some whose sacrifice was equal to that of the missionaries on the field. Many of the sacrifices of these faithful stewards will never be known until the day when all things shall be revealed and one instance of the spirit that was shown by many must suffice. Two elderly ladies, who have since entered into their rest, lived on a small income from invested funds. They had followed the work of the Mission closely from the beginning, praying much for it, giving every penny they could save, and only regretting that their advanced age made it impossible for them to give themselves. When a crisis came and there was not sufficient money to pay the travelling expenses of the party of missionaries then waiting to open up the Terena Indian work, these two servants of God made up what was lacking by drawing on the principal of the money they had invested, reducing their means to such an extent that when their Lord called them

they had nothing to leave. Thus there were many who shared with the missionaries the heat and burden of the day. It is such incidents that make one realize how equal is the partnership between the missionary and the helper at home, how indispensable the one is to the other and to what extent the credit must be shared with those who "hold the ropes."

**Increasing Opposition.** The missionaries had to do most of the building themselves and for many months they were engaged in erecting posts, hoisting rafters into position, digging and carting stone for foundations, making adobe bricks, building walls, thatching and making doors and windows. While they were busy at this work, a school teacher arrived in the village appointed by the state government to open a school amongst the Indians and it was soon found that he had been sent at the instigation of the Roman Catholic priests to counteract the influence of the Protestant missionaries. Previously the priests had shown no interest in the Terenas. The Indians were too poor to offer adequate financial returns for the ministrations of a priest. The school teacher was a man of low moral character, but he had a zeal for the cause he represented. He worked in an underhanded way, feigning friendship while he developed a most ambitious scheme which was to result in the expulsion of the "Protestants."

This school teacher first influenced the politics of the tribe to such an extent that he finally succeeded in getting the Chief, Pedro, deposed and

Marcolino installed in his place. This seemed a real victory, for Marcolino was the able opponent of the missionaries. The teacher then prepared several petitions making extravagant charges against the missionaries and demanding that they be expelled from among the Indians. He had the drink-sellers at the railway station and several of the Indians sign the petitions, which he then sent to the Government in Rio de Janeiro. It is hardly to be wondered at that the government officials at first gave credence to the accusations and sent a telegram to the new Chief, Marcolino, instructing him to expel the missionaries, or, if they would not go, to take them prisoners.

**When God Overrules.** In the interval, however, a radical change had taken place in the situation in Bananal. Marcolino and his wife, who had both been attending some of the Gospel meetings, professed conversion, and the able opponent was transformed into the equally faithful defender. When the telegram was received Marcolino refused to obey it, declaring that as the Gospel could be freely preached in the Brazilian villages, it could not be excluded from the Indian villages.

It was not until the closing day of the year 1915, more than two years after the opening of the work, that the first five Terena converts made public profession of their faith in baptism. They had been two years of difficulty and discouragement, of opposition and faith testing with little evidence of progress. Yet it was during that time that the real fight was fought and won. The seed that was



sown in faith and tears was soon to bear fruit in an abundant harvest of souls.

A few days before the baptisms took place, a priest visited the Indians at the invitation of the teacher. The Indians knew little about Roman Catholicism, but the priest gained a ready allegiance from some by assuring them that there was no harm in drinking and dancing. He made no demand that they forsake their heathenism or sin, requiring only that they have their children baptized and make feasts on certain saints' days when drinking and dancing would be only the natural expression of the joy of the worshippers. The religion which he offered had no relation to morality; indeed, its morality was lower than the simple animism of the Indian. The Chief of Ipegue village and his wife were addicted to drink and although they had shown some interest in the Gospel, they decided in favour of the easier way and refused to permit the preaching of the Gospel in their village. The whole village immediately abandoned itself to drinking and for many successive nights the beat of the tom-tom told the sad story of the priest's influence.

**The Enemy's Master Stroke.** Before his departure, the priest prophesied that God would prove the missionaries to be impostors by causing some great calamity to overtake them. A few days later lightning struck one of the Mission Houses during a great storm and two of the missionaries, Rev. Mr. and Mrs. Whittington, suffered slight injury. The prediction had come true and



this strange incident seemed likely to seriously prejudice the Gospel work. To the Indian mind, the priest had vindicated himself as conclusively as any medicine-man could have done. The opponents of the Gospel were triumphant and some of the converts asked, "How can it be explained?" But again a mightier than Satan took part in the struggle, and what might have been disaster was, by God's overruling, turned into blessing.

Until then, the few converts that there were had not realized their separateness from the rest of the tribe. They had not yet broken entirely free from the old associations or from the influence of the Indian idea of tribal unity and the essential difference between their tribe and all other peoples. The opinion and interests of the tribe were still the deciding factor in their thinking. That incident, however, was used by the Holy Spirit to cause a sharp cleavage of opinion between those who were truly converted and the unbelievers. It revealed to all the chasm which separates the carnal minded from the spiritual children of God. The converts were forced to take a definite stand, identifying themselves with the missionaries and they began to realize that they were members indeed of a special people, which was not a tribe, but the universal brotherhood of believers in Christ. It proved to be the turning point in the work which from that time made rapid progress, many of the Indians professing conversion and the spiritual lives of the Christians becoming deeper and stronger.

Marcolino's action in refusing to obey the orders



INDIAN CHURCH IN BANANAL AND PART OF THE CONGREGATION



of the Government and expel the missionaries, caused the federal authorities to make investigations and several officials visited Bananal. The outcome of the investigation was that the missionaries were commended for their work and the teacher dismissed. The teacher had not taken God into his reckoning. Satan's plans worked out to his own undoing. How often does God in this way turn seeming defeat into victory, humbling us before His power and wisdom and causing us to praise Him for His faithfulness! After the departure of the teacher there followed four years of freedom from any official opposition. The missionaries took over the school work again and the Gospel work made steady progress with the result that at the end of that time there was an organized church with eighty members.

**New Difficulties.** In the year 1917 the Brazilian Society for the Protection of the Indians decided to place a representative among the Terenas, and the State Inspector placed a young man in Bananal as Indian Agent. On the day of his arrival he was told by the Inspector in the presence of the missionaries that he was to open a day-school for the children of Indians who were opposed to the Gospel and did not wish to send their children to the Mission School, but he was warned not to interfere in any way with the school which the missionaries were conducting. His first act, however, after the departure of the Inspector, was to demand the key of the schoolhouse which had been built by the Indians with the help of the Mission for the Mis-

sion School. Nor did he desist from his demand until the matter had been referred to the Inspector. Finally he opened school in a hut next to the Mission School and for a time all appeared to go well and the relations between the Agent and the missionaries were friendly, but two years later circumstances arose which induced him to make a determined effort to bring an end to the influence of the missionaries.

The State Inspector who had held the office for several years and had been appreciative of the efforts of the missionaries, retired and was succeeded by a man of a very different type from the usual cultured and broad-minded S. P. I. official. The new Inspector regarded the missionaries as interlopers and had no sympathy with their work. The Agent in Bananal had become very jealous of the influence of the missionaries and his attitude was not improved by the fact that the Christian Indians were not slow to reprove him for anything they considered as unworthy in his conduct. His school was held spasmodically and did not prosper although he sent glowing reports to his superior. The attendance was small, which was not altogether his fault, for the Christians naturally preferred to send their children to the Mission School and the conservative heathen element which was opposed to the Gospel had little interest in education. The Indian Agent at that time among the Bororos also had a personal grudge against the Protestant missionaries and had vowed that he would put an end to their work among the Indians.



He made an extended visit to Bananal for the purpose of leading the attack against the missionaries and for several months the two agents spared no efforts to secure their expulsion.

**Faithful Amid Persecution.** Their methods were as unscrupulous as those of the former school teacher. They tried to intimidate the Indians. They exceeded their powers by posting various edicts in the village, prohibiting the missionaries from preaching to the Indians and even from entering the Indian reserve, and expelling Marcolino and others of the leading Christian Indians from the village. They took possession of the school-house in spite of the protests of the Indians. When the missionaries gave no heed to the "edict" prohibiting their entrance into the reserve, the Agents had the gate of the Mission enclosure closed with barbed wire. When it became known in the village that they had done so, some of the Christian Indians immediately removed the barbed wire. The Agents reported to the federal authorities that the missionaries were disturbing the peace of the Indian community and that there was danger of open fighting between the Christian and non-Christian Indians, a statement that was entirely without foundation.

For a time the missionaries refrained from preaching in the village. They held meetings at the Mission Houses while the Indians themselves conducted the services in the church. The Christians remained firm in the face of the opposition. Marcolino and the others refused to obey the order

to leave the village, but he felt the injustice of the treatment he was receiving keenly. On one occasion he became discouraged and, at the close of a meeting in the church at which the missionaries were not present, he suggested to the other Christians that, as much of the bitterness of the enemies of the Gospel was being directed against him personally, it might be advisable for him to resign from the chieftainship. Then Honorio, one of the oldest Christians and a deacon of the church, rose and exhorted the Chief to stand firm. "Let us not lose courage," he said; "if God is what we believe Him to be, He will defeat our enemies. If He cannot, we shall soon see, but let us not give up our faith or be weak until we have proved that He cannot help us. Let us be patient and stand firm and we know the Gospel must triumph." Marcolino took fresh courage and the crisis passed.

It was finally decided that the Chief and another of the Indians should accompany one of the missionaries to Rio de Janeiro to interview the officials of the Society for the Protection of the Indians. The journey was entirely successful. They received much kindness from the leaders of the Brazilian churches in the capital, and were treated courteously by the government officials who finally realized that they had been misled and assured the Indians and the missionaries of complete freedom in preaching the Gospel in accordance with the liberal constitution of the Republic. About the same time, a new State Inspector was appointed who has continued in office since then and has

shown in all his dealings with the missionaries and their work an unfailing courtesy and fairness which have been most heartily appreciated.

The higher officials of the Society for the Protection of the Indians have now become better acquainted with the missionaries and their aims and methods, and have shown sincere appreciation of the results obtained in the work done at Bananal. As a result of the better understanding, they have expressed their readiness to permit evangelical missionaries to labour among all the Indian tribes in Brazil. Thus has the work among the Terena Indians contributed towards the opening of the vast Indian field of Brazil to Protestant missions.

At the present time the whole Indian field of South America is wide open to the Gospel. Surely it is significant that, with the opening of the door, many of God's people are being burdened to enter in and take possession of the land for Christ. These are unmistakable signs of God's purpose. If we are faithful to the call and this glorious opportunity we may be assured of an abundant harvest.

## IX

### NEW CREATURES IN CHRIST

*"With joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation."*—ISAIAH 12:3.

WHEN the Terena Indian work was started, there were many who prophesied failure. Some considered that it was not worth while devoting the money and lives that would be necessary to evangelize a comparatively small and scattered group of people (not realizing that the Indians of South America actually number millions). Others despaired of accomplishing anything of real value among such a primitive people, saying that the Indians were of such low intelligence that they would have to undergo a long process of civilization, through schools and industrial training, before they would be prepared to receive spiritual truth. If it were not for the fact that the Gospel is the power of God to save to the uttermost, the outlook would indeed have been hopeless.

It is well known that Darwin, when he encountered the Indians of Tierra del Fuego, believed that he had found the link between civilized man and his hypothetical ape ancestor. The great scientist regarded these Indians as the lowest representatives of the human race and thought it would be impossible to civilize them through missionary

work—a judgment which he subsequently reversed in the generous tribute which he made years afterwards when he revisited that region and was astonished and delighted at the results of the missionary work that had been carried on amongst them in the interval. “The success of the Tierra del Fuego Mission is most wonderful and charms me,” he wrote, “as I always prophesied utter failure.”

**The Gospel’s Power.** It is fascinating to watch the change take place when the savage becomes a child of God. The problem of his civilization is solved by his conversion. How often have we been told of Indians brought up from childhood in the homes of civilized people, taught to read and write, accustomed to civilized ways and even forgetting their own language, but, when they reached manhood or womanhood, returning to their tribe and to naked savagery without a trace of the influence of civilization. We have seen a Bororo Indian, naked and painted like his fellows who had been educated in a Roman Catholic school, learned to speak Portuguese and Italian and had travelled to Rio de Janeiro and Rome.

The effort to civilize the Indian by training and education only has often proved most disappointing. But when the Gospel has first exercised its regenerating influence, material progress follows as the almost inevitable outcome of an inner urge. The conservative upholder of tribal custom becomes the eager advocate of progress. The dormant intellect unfolds as a flower in the morning



sunshine. Moral strength appears where weakness had reigned supreme and the courage of hope takes the place of the moral and spiritual inertia that before had pervaded the whole being.

Although elementary educational work was carried on among the Terenas and every encouragement given them to learn the arts and ways of civilization, the missionaries depended for results entirely upon the preaching of the Gospel. Nor were they disappointed in the outcome, for it amply justified their faith in the glorious Gospel to meet the utmost need of humanity.

**A Christian Chief.** One of the earliest triumphs was the conversion of the new Chief, Marcolino, and his wife, Georgina. Marcolino is a man of strong character with remarkable qualities of leadership. He is devoted to the interests of his people. As a young man he had secured the freedom of several of his tribesmen who had been trapped by the iniquitous system which makes the debtor the virtual slave of his master. Too wise to be caught himself, he worked as a cattleman and saved sufficient to pay their debts. Naturally those whom he thus freed are now among his most loyal supporters. On one occasion, after he became chief, he declined a flattering offer made by a Brazilian friend of the Indians, to become manager of a cattle ranch, saying that he wished to remain where he could serve his people.

His viewpoint and manner of thinking are, of course, thoroughly Indian, but his mind is keen and his judgments are usually just and wise. He

understands his own people and knows how to deal with them. The integrity of his character forces the respect even of those who are most opposed to him on account of his religious convictions, and friends and opponents alike bring their differences to him to settle. He derives no income whatever from his position, but through his own industry is one of the most prosperous in the tribe, owning a considerable number of cattle and a large plantation.

He is grave and dignified in manner, slow in forming judgments, and stubborn in defending them. In speech he is courteous but decided. He is consistent and dependable. So far as the advance of his people to civilization is concerned, he is decidedly progressive, throwing the whole weight of his influence against the continuance of the old tribal dances and ceremonies. When it was suggested to him that some of these institutions were interesting and in themselves harmless, he replied that the best way for his people to advance was to forget entirely all customs which might tend to bind them to the old life. When the Indian Agent took possession of the schoolhouse, Marcolino and his family vacated two of the three rooms of his house and placed them at the disposal of the Mission School. The school has been conducted in his house now for several years.

As a Christian, he has been consistent in his life and testimony. During the thirteen years since his conversion he has been faithful in his attendance at the services. He takes his turn with the other

preachers in conducting cottage meetings and sometimes goes with them to preach in other villages. Believing it wisest to keep the civil and religious authority absolutely distinct, he has not accepted any office in the church, and though he would brook no interference in his own sphere, he recognizes the authority of the church courts in spiritual matters.

Marcolino has organized a volunteer corps of police who keep good order in the reserve, forcing even the Brazilians who visit or pass through the territory to conduct themselves peaceably. An interesting instance of the soundness of his judgment occurred once when some bandits and rum-sellers were threatening the security of the roads around Bananal. At the close of an evening service at which the writer was present, Marcolino informed him that he was going to send an escort with him to see that he was not molested on the way to the Mission Houses, two miles distant. The writer assured him that he had no fear and that God would protect him. "You are right," replied Marcolino, "but I have to look at the matter in a different way for I am the civil authority and am responsible for the safety of the roads." The writer had waited but a few moments at the appointed place when the dusky forms of half a dozen sturdy Indian guards suddenly appeared at his side. He set out on the ride home, neither seeing nor hearing anything more of his guards until he was nearing his destination, when they again appeared as suddenly and silently to bid good-night.

**Christian Homes.** Georgina, the wife of the Chief, is a gracious little lady, friendly and happy in disposition, yet earnest and carrying herself with the native dignity and modesty so often seen among Indian women. She was among the first group of Terenas that were baptized and has shown steady growth in her spiritual life. Recently she has become a very acceptable speaker at women's meetings. The women are naturally shy and shrink from any public appearance, so that it means much more for them to take a public part in the services than for the men who have always been accustomed to express themselves in the village councils.

One day Georgina and Marcolino invited us to lunch with them at their house. We sat at a table covered with a clean white cloth and set with the necessary cutlery and dishes. Their daughter, Tesalonica, a bright Christian girl, served us with a three-course meal, which was concluded with small cups of black coffee in the Brazilian style. There was a refinement in the home that bore unmistakable witness that Christ was honoured there, while, in material things, it was furnished better than many a Brazilian peasant's house.

The influence of the Gospel is nowhere seen to better advantage than in the home. The Christian home, with all that means, takes the place of the heathen household of convenience. The woman gains her rightful place and the children are brought up in the fear of God. Squalor, dirt and unsanitary conditions give place to clean, tidy and healthful surroundings. Entering unexpectedly on



one occasion the house of one of the most intelligent Christians, we encountered a scene that we shall not readily forget. His wife was sitting sewing at one of the latest model drophead Singer sewing-machines while he was busy reading an Old Testament story to his boy who stood at his knee. Nine years before that, these Indians had not even heard the Gospel story, yet in the short time since it was first preached to them it has profoundly influenced the lives of many; indeed, so radically have they been changed that they can only be described, in the language of Scripture, as new creatures in Christ.

**Trophies of Grace.** An interesting case of conversion was that of Georgina's brother, Virissimo. He was a slave to strong drink and had earned for himself the distinction of being known as the greatest drunkard in the village. He was seldom sober and was often to be seen making his horse prance and rear in the streets as he indulged in a display of Bacchanalian bravado, while he was so drunk that he could hardly have stood upon his feet. Yet he was an intelligent and big-hearted man, proud of his family and distressed at the fact that, as a result of his squandering everything he had to satisfy his craving for liquor, his wife and children were ill-nourished and sickly.

Virissimo was very anxious to be freed from his drunkenness, but he was not willing to make a full surrender to Christ for there were other sins in his life which he did not wish to give up. He sent his children to the Gospel services and urged them to



accept Christ and be baptized, but he himself would not yield. Several times he attempted to stop drinking, but after two or three days of pitiful struggle he would fall again. He once journeyed thirty miles to the nearest Brazilian village in search of medicine that would cure him of drunkenness. Finally, however, as a result of much prayer, he yielded and professed conversion, and from that hour he was a changed man. For ten years now he has not touched strong drink.

Several years after his conversion, he gave the following testimony: "I was such a slave to liquor that if I smelled it I would have to drink, but the moment I gave myself to Christ, He took even the desire for it away so that I have not even wanted to drink since. I don't know how God did it, it is so wonderful. Now everything is changed, and I am so much happier. I would probably have died a drunkard's death by this time if the Gospel had not been brought to us. The Gospel is the salvation of my people and we cannot tell how much we owe to the missionaries for bringing it to us."

After Virissimo was converted, his material circumstances improved rapidly, and at the end of eighteen months he was one of the most prosperous men in the village. His family was well provided for, nicely dressed and happy. The whole family, with the exception of the younger children, are members of the Church. The children are growing up in a Christian atmosphere in home, Mission School and Sunday School. What a transforma-

tion the Gospel's power and the presence of Christ have made in that home!

The father and mother of Virissimo and Georgina are an interesting old couple. He was born in the Chaco and in his youth was a naked Indian of the forest. Even yet he refuses to discard the bow and arrow for the modern rifle. They are very old people, their hair about as white as an Indian's can be, and their brown skin deeply wrinkled and lined, yet they are erect and active. Both of them were witch-doctors, and it was he who attempted to kill the missionaries by witchcraft when they first started work amongst the tribe. But as the years went by, all of their children, one after another, and then most of their grandchildren, professed conversion, and these, of course, started praying for the salvation of the two old folk.

With such earnest prayer being offered on their behalf, their conversion was inevitable. Virissimo's conversion impressed them greatly, and they were genuinely pleased to see the change that came into his life and home. The old mother was the first to yield. On the day when she was being examined for baptism her face was radiant and the joy of the Lord shone in her eyes as she placed her hand over her heart and exclaimed, "Jesus is in here; I know He is, for I am so happy now!" Sometime later the father also surrendered to Christ. Gone forever are the superstitions of a lifetime. The black arts are practiced no more, but in their place is a living faith in Christ.

**Indians in Church.** A baptismal service has always been looked upon by the Terena Christians as a time of great rejoicing. On the day previous the women have been busy washing and ironing, and long before the appointed hour the people begin to gather by the lakeside just outside the village, all dressed in their very best and happy in anticipation of the event. Many dress in white, but here and there a bright red or yellow or blue adds colour and variety to the picturesque scene as they stand around or sit on the grass in little groups waiting for the service to commence. Usually several hundred Indians are present at these services.

An open-air Gospel service is held first, then those who are to be baptized go down one by one into the water. Before being baptized, each one gives a testimony. These testimonies are always wonderful to hear, for those who give them have all been saved from much, and their former lives are well known by all. When the converts come up out of the water, they dress in new clothes, a custom which originated among the Indians themselves and which they feel symbolizes the new life in Christ to which they have witnessed in baptism.

Of all the services held in the little Terena Church, probably the most interesting and inspiring is the Sunday morning Communion service. Although comparatively few years have passed since the first Gospel meeting was held, there will be an attendance of between one and two hundred Indians, the great majority of whom are believers

and their families. All are neatly dressed in clothes that are newly washed and ironed. The women and girls wear their jet black hair combed straight back and gathered in a knot at the back of the head. Some of them have shoes and stockings, while a few of the men appear in collar and tie. In one corner a score of bright-eyed, irrepressible boys sit together, nudging and pinching one another as they keep a wary eye on the grave deacon stationed near by to keep them in order. An equal number of little girls sit demurely in another corner. The audience is quiet and reverent and it is a joy to look into their happy faces. Towards the end of the service the Indian office-bearers pass down the aisles dispensing the symbols of our Lord's death to the seventy or eighty communicants who may be present.

The privilege of partaking of communion is not lightly regarded by these Terena Christians. The standard is high and the office-bearers would not willingly give communion to one whom they knew to be living an inconsistent life. Occasionally a member will voluntarily refrain from partaking, feeling convicted regarding something in his or her life that must first be put right. These believers are far from being perfect and the same difficulties and disappointments are to be met with among them as among any other group of Christians anywhere, but they are most sincere in their faith and earnest in their efforts to walk "the narrow way" and to keep the testimony of the Church pure before the world.



Occasionally a testimony meeting is held when the converts, both men and women, are not backward in telling what God has done for them. On such occasions, when, one after another, these Indians rise to declare their faith in Christ, a feeling of awe steals over one anew at the marvel of the work which God has wrought in their lives. The weekly prayer-meeting is a real prayer-meeting where the believers come to pray. Some have learned to be true intercessors, and most earnestly they plead for the unconverted and for the many Indian tribes that are still without the Gospel.

The Sunday School is, as in any church, one of the most important branches of the work. The teachers of the different classes are all Indians. A Bible Class has long been conducted for the young men and women and has given encouraging results. A dozen men and several of the women have become preachers of the Gospel. They conduct eight cottage meetings each week in various parts of Bananal, Ipegue and the surrounding district and make frequent visits to the more distant villages of the tribe. These Indian preachers give their time entirely free.

**Indian Preachers.** The Terena preachers are an interesting group of men. As among a similar band at home, many different types of character are to be found among them. The preacher with longest experience is Honorio, a man of middle age, who professed conversion some thirteen years ago. Before his conversion he was a rum-seller and a heavy drinker. He commenced preaching shortly



after his conversion, holding meetings in his own house, and his strong testimony during the early days of the work contributed greatly towards breaking down the prejudice of his people and leading many of them to accept the Gospel. Though not aggressive, he is one of the most intelligent of the Indians, and, for that reason, always has been one of the most influential men in the village. He is kindly in disposition, of an even temperament and deeply spiritual. As a deacon of the church, he has proved faithful and wise in assisting to care for the believers. He is one of the most capable of the preachers, with a message that is always thoughtful and spiritual.

Enrique, another of the preachers and one of the first group to receive baptism, has a very attractive personality. He was a young man when he professed conversion and had the most unusual record of never having taken strong drink. He has become a very capable carpenter, supporting himself by that trade. His regular, clear-cut features have not been marred by indulgence in sin. He is quiet-mannered, slow, painstaking, with a ready smile and a mild twinkle in his eye. He is a good preacher, but given to lengthy sermons. The climax was reached at a meeting which he took shortly after he was made a deacon. Quietly, deliberately and with a reassuring smile, he preached, supporting his points with a large number of well-chosen texts which he turned up very calmly, slowly and always with a reassuring smile. When he had preached about thirty minutes his audience

began to show decided signs of weariness. When an hour had almost gone, Chief Marcolino rose suddenly with a hopeless expression on his face and went outside to walk up and down until the end would come. But not even that succeeded in disconcerting the preacher who went steadily on with his points and quotations. However, Enrique has improved since then!

A most earnest and forceful preacher is Manoel, a man whose intense nature is kept under iron control. Sometimes he puts both fire and eloquence into his messages. He used to be a drunkard given to fighting in the streets of the village, but he is now a most consistent Christian man. Another, whose life previous to his conversion had been similar to Manoel's, is Paulo, a younger man whose temperament approximates more nearly to that of the conventional Indian. He is solemn and stolid in appearance—except when he smiles, when his real self is revealed and one recognizes the bright and happy Christian that he is. He also is a miracle of grace, for he was once drunken, brutish and sullen. Now his preaching is effective to the salvation of souls.

Antonio, the "wise man" of the village, is an interesting character. He has a passion for learning, and had his advantages been greater his attainments might have been considerable. He has dabbled in English, Spanish, Guarani, French and Arabic, purchased a camera and insisted that the missionaries teach him to take and develop photographs. He is much respected for his learning by

his people and his aid is often sought for the writing of a letter, the checking of an account, or making a record of births and deaths. He is not as strong in character as some of the other preachers but he is a sincere Christian with a considerable knowledge of the Bible. As a preacher he would be excellent if it were not that, in his ambition to be eloquent, he makes use of words and phrases that are not understood either by the audience or by himself.

The work of the native preachers is of inestimable value. Their sermons are neither deep nor learned, but just simple presentations of the Gospel, yet they are given in a form best understood by the Indian. The missionary cannot think just as the Indian does nor can he state the message in terms adapted to the Indian mind so well as the Indian himself can do. Through their aid most of the villages and settlements of the tribe are visited from time to time with the Gospel message and the influence of the work is thus spread over an area very much larger than the missionaries themselves could have reached. For several years the Chief of Ipegue village refused to allow the missionaries to preach in the village but during that time the Indian preachers kept the work going conducting the meetings themselves.

**Faith's Victory.** The Gospel light shines steadily in Bananal, and, as the years pass, it grows stronger and brighter, testifying amid the surrounding darkness to the wonderful power of the Gospel. In describing the results of the Gospel work among

the Terenas, it may seem that we have told the story of a triumphal march rather than of a fiercely contested field. But it was seldom during the years that the work has been in progress that the Enemy did not press hard upon us; he did not surrender a foot of ground without a struggle. There were times—long, weary months, when the advantage seemed to lie with Satan, when both missionaries and converts were buffeted and sifted. There were occasions when the stoutest-hearted felt discouraged. But, as we look back over years of service, it is not the stony path over which we have journeyed that holds our gaze, for that has all but disappeared amid the glittering peaks of God's faithfulness that crowd the landscape!

The hardships, the oftentimes seemingly fruitless toil, the sickness, the disappointments, the dangers, the discomforts, the loneliness—yea, and our own failures and weakness and unfaithfulness—these all fall away as a scaffolding that has served its day and is forgotten, as we behold the finished, perfect work of God. On the foreign field we do not find easily gained success: we find death, but it is death that is swallowed up in victory. Inland South America is one of the hardest of mission fields; but though we may "go forth weeping, bearing the precious seed," we shall surely "come again rejoicing."

**The Great, Unfinished Task.** Rejoicing there now is among the Terena Indians and joy in the hearts of many who have been saved from superstition and sin. Surely the Terena work has dem-



onstrated the practicability of evangelizing the Indians of the interior. What has been accomplished amongst the Terenas can be done among the hundreds of other tribes that are still unevangelized. The work has only been begun. Of the eight million Indians in South America, not more than one per cent. are within effective reach of any evangelical missionary. The field presents one of the greatest missionary problems that has ever challenged the Church, but the problem is no greater than the resources which belong to those who by faith go forward in obedience to God's command.

Too long have these forgotten tribes been left in their wretchedness and despair, a prey to superstition and to the oppression and greed of the white man. This is God's day for the South American Indians, and many of His people are responding to their cry. Inland South America is one of the great fields in which pioneer work has still to be done: a field which calls for sacrifice and for haste, on the part both of those who go and those who serve at home. It is a field that has already yielded glorious results to the preaching of the simple story of Salvation through Christ, but only the fringe of the need has been touched. The writer would appeal most earnestly to those who read to prayerfully consider what portion of the burden of this great task the Lord of the Harvest would have them bear. Intercessors with the burden of the need must be found; God's stewards must be given the vision of possibility and



responsibility; God's question, "Who will go for us?" must be answered.

The missionary in Inland South America carries a great burden, for around him on every side are vast territories without a witness to Christ. Ever present before him is that vision which our blessed Lord received as He passed through the fields and, as His gaze wandered over the sea of ripened grain, saw the multitudes of every tribe and nation waiting for the reapers. And still they are waiting—hungry souls waiting, they know not what for! But we have the "Bread of Life" which alone can give them Eternal Life and rescue them from darkness and despair. "Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest that he thrust forth labourers into his harvest."

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